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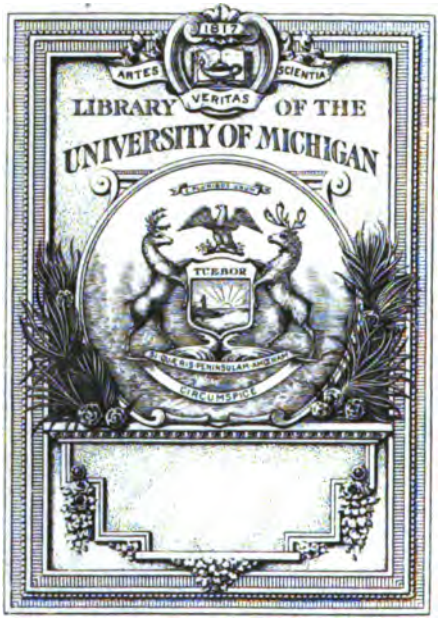

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THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON'S HEAD VALET

CONTAINING DETAILS OF THE PRIVATE LIFE OF

NAPOLEON, HIS FAMILY AND HIS COURT

NOW FIRST TRANSLATED BY

PERCY PINKERTON

IN FOUR VOLUMES—VOLUME IV

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CONTENTS OF VOL. IV

CHAPTER I

PAGE

The Muscovites ask for alms—The Emperor distributes money and food—Days at the Kremlin—The Emperor's system of municipal government—A theatre built—A famous Italian singer—Talk of retreat—The Emperor prolongs his meals—The Comédie Française—Treaty between Murat and Kutusoff—The Kremlin churches stripped—Reviews—The Kremlin blown up by order of Napoleon—The Emperor on the road to Smolensk—The carrion-crows—The wounded at Oupinskoë—Their transport—The Emperor charged with cruelty—The Emperor's headquarters—The Cossacks—Mallet's conspiracy—General Savary—Arrival at Smolensk—The Emperor to the rescue—His untiring energy—Stragglers—Marshal Davoust's fury—Marshal Ney is found again—The Emperor's need of him—Prince Eugene weeps for joy—Marshal Lefebvre . . . 1

CHAPTER II

A council of war—The burning of the eagles—Russia gets only dust—The Emperor and the artillery—Generals Grouchy and Sebastiani—A surprise at Borizow—Victor and Oudinot—An officer's generous act—A pontoon bridge constructed across the Beresina—The Emperor's dejection—The enemy abandon their positions—The bridge breaks—Appalling scene—The Russian prisoners—Arrival at Malodeczno—The Emperor and M. de Caulaincourt—Marshal Davoust—The Emperor's agitation—He tells me of his scheme—His thoughtfulness for me—Impression upon the army made by the Emperor's departure—Birds frozen—The sleep from which there is no awaking—Horseflesh flavoured with gunpowder—Young Lapouriel—Arrival at Wilna—Prince d'Aremberg half-dead with cold—Burning the carriages—A night alarm—Loss of the treasury 18

CHAPTER III

The Emperor badly lodged—Hovels full of vermin—The Emperor's apartment—The council-chamber—The Emperor's proclamation—Inhabitants of the Russian huts—The Emperor's tent—Marshal Berthier and the Emperor—A coolness—M. Colin, clerk of the kitchen—Roustan—The Emperor cannot sleep—His care

PAGE

for his hands—He is extremely sensitive to cold—A chapel demolished at Witepsk—Discontent of the inhabitants—A strange spectacle—The soldiers of the Guard bathe with females—Review of the grenadiers—General Friant—The Emperor gives him the fraternal embrace—Reply to false statements—Generals nibbling army biscuit—Officers and men share and share alike—Marauders—Straw pallets—M. de Bausset—How the Emperor's servants spent a night—I never once undress—Canvas sacks instead of beds—The Emperor's consideration for us—Vermin—We give up our mattresses to Russian officers 37

CHAPTER IV

Publication in Paris of the 29th Bulletin—Two day's interval and arrival of the Emperor—Marie Louise and Josephine—The resources of France—The Emperor's personal influence—I leave Smorghoni—The King of Naples assumes command—Route taken by the Emperor—Hopes of the Poles—I reach the Tuileries—The Emperor sends for me—His kindly welcome—The Empress's coldness—Queen Hortense—The Emperor's questions—I resume my duties—The Emperor and the Mallet business—Everyone in mourning—Their Majesties at the Opera—Talma and Geoffroy—No New Year's gifts—The Emperor in Paris with Duroc—His passion for buildings—Frequent shooting parties—The English newspapers. 48

CHAPTER V

Hunting at Grosbois—The Empress and her ladies—Unexpected journey—The route to Fontainebleau—Agreement with the Pope—Distribution of favours—The Cardinals—The Pope regrets his act—Marshal Kellermann—The Emperor on Rome ancient and modern—His Majesty's views as to the Pontificate—Return to Paris—Offer of escort—The Emperor's plans—Paris the handsomest city in the world—The Emperor and M. Fontaine—Scheme for building an Italian embassy—The Emperor and the King of Rome's palace—He enters into details—The Elysée he finds disagreeable and the Tuileries uninhabitable—His passion for building increases—The King of Rome at a review—Enthusiasm of the people and of the soldiers—The Emperor greatly pleased at this—M. Fontaine is again questioned—My salary doubled 57

CHAPTER VI

Murat leaves for Naples—Eugene assumes command—Headquarters at Posen—The wreck of an army—More disquieting news—Resolve to depart—The Empress regent—Our departure for Erfurt—Visit to the Duchess of Weimar—The Emperor pleased with his reception—The Emperor's house—Eckhardtsberg transformed into headquarters—Arrival at Lützen—Death of the Duke of Istria—Napoleon's letter to the Duchess—The King of Saxony erects a monument—The young recruits—Ney's opinion of them—The

PAGE

Prussians commanded by their King in person—His Majesty enters Dresden—An explosion—The Emperor slightly wounded—General Flahaut's mission—The Emperor of Austria's congratulations—M. de Bubna at Dresden—The Emperor does not rest—His ability to sleep—Battle of Bautzen—The Saxon populace—The recruits are inadvertently wounded—The Emperor admits his having been unjust 69

CHAPTER VII

Death of Marshal Duroc—Grief of the Emperor—Details of this sad event—The Emperor's impatience—His hairbreadth escapes—Death of General Kirgener—The Marshal still breathing—The Emperor's distress—The Russians utterly routed—The Marshal's dying sigh—His epitaph—We enter Silesia—The Emperor's cool-headedness—March on Breslau—The Emperor in a pillaged farm—Four waggons destroyed by fire—We enter Breslau—Armistice of the 4th of June—Our stay at Görlitz—Return to Dresden—Rumours quelled by the Emperor's presence—The Marcolini Palace—The Emperor lives as he did at Schönbrunn—The Comédie Française summoned to Dresden—Formation of the company—The Emperor's pastimes—Mademoiselle Georges—Talma and Mars lunch with His Majesty—Festivities in Dresden—Encampments outside the town—The Emperor's fête-day—The troops at the "Te Deum" 85

CHAPTER VIII

A desire for peace—Our honour satisfied—Difficulties raised by the Czar—Austria mediates—Departure from Dresden—Splendid appearance of our troops—England and the coalition—The Lunéville conditions—Civil war in Prussia—The Duke of Otranto—Fouché made Governor-General of Illyria—Devotion of the Duke of Rovigo—Arrival of the King of Naples—The fortification of Dresden—We travel to Mayence—Death of the Duke of Abrantes—The Emperor's grief—Brief interview with the Empress—The Emperor three whole days in his study—Expiration of the armistice—Performance by the Comédie Française—Party at General Durosnel's—Lord Bristol—The French infantry and cavalry and their several divisions—The enemy's forces—Two to one—Austria proves perfidious—Declaration of war—Count Louis de Narbonne 102

CHAPTER IX

The Emperor strives for peace—The Bautzen battlefield—Murat at the head of the Imperial Guard—The Emperor at Görlitz—Interview with the Duke of Vicenza—The gage of peace—Blücher in Silesia—He violates the armistice—General Jomini and the Czar—First tidings of Moreau—General Jomini is presented to him—Mutual coldness—Two traitors—Murat's mission—The Emperor and General Gourgaud—Dresden menaced—General Haxo is sent

PAGE

to General Vandamme—The Emperor on the Dresden bridge—The town reassured by his presence—The Latour-Maubourg cuirassiers—Great battle—The Emperor in greater danger than ever—He is drenched through—My difficulty in undressing him—His only attack of fever—The day after the victory—His Majesty's brilliant escort—News from Paris—Trial of Michel and Reynier—The Empress leaves for Cherbourg—His Majesty's solicitude 113

CHAPTER X

The King of Naples' bravery—The effect of his appearance—The Emperor eulogises him—The Emperor on the battlefield—The sick and wounded—Details recounted by a peasant—Prince Schwartzenberg believed to be dead—The Prince de Neufchâtel's dog—Inscription on its collar—Death of Moreau—His last moments—Resolve to march on Berlin—Departure from Dresden—Marshal Saint-Cyr—The Castle of Düben—The Emperor's scheme is proclaimed to the troops—The Generals dissent—The Emperor dejected and listless—Departure for Leipzig—The staff officers delighted—Marshal Augereau sides with Napoleon—Brief stay at Leipzig—Proclamations issued by the Crown Prince of Sweden—M. Moldrecht—Heavy firing—Our ammunition exhausted—Orders for retreat—The Emperor and Prince Poniatowski—The King of Saxony's indignation—His Majesty's peril—Final leave-taking of the two Sovereigns 125

CHAPTER XI

The horrors of Leipzig—Exits from the city closed—Our difficulty in escaping—The mill at Lindenau—Napoleon sleeps—The Elster bridge blown up—The Emperor's fury—A succession of disasters—Marshal Macdonald swims across the river—Deaths of General Dumortier and Prince Poniatowski—The Emperor's grief—Disposal of the Prince's remains—Two days at Erfurt—The King of Naples takes leave of Napoleon—The King of Saxony a prisoner—The Emperor is indignant—Brilliant victory at Hanau—We reach Mayence—The Emperor's letter to the Empress—His return to France—Arrival at Saint-Cloud—The Emperor questions me—Hopes of peace—M. de Saint-Aignan—Vain hopes—The bliss of mediocrity 143

CHAPTER XII

German secret societies—The Emperor and the freemasons—Cambacérès' presidential gravity—Fanatical assassins—Promenade beside the Elbe—A Saxon magistrate—Religious zeal of a Protestant—The "Tugendverein"—Sects in 1813—The Black Knights and the Black Legion—The Order of Louise—Baron de Nostitz—Germany divided by three sectarian leaders—Madame Brede and the ex-Elector of Hesse-Cassel—Intrigue of Baron de Nostitz—M. de Stein's secretaries—Real aim of secret societies—Their importance—The Emperor makes enquiries 153

CHAPTER XIII

PAGE

Mayence in an uproar—Convocation of the Legislative Body—General von Wrede's ingratitude—Family troubles—The Emperor's activity redoubled—The buildings of Paris—Troops equipped as by magic—Anxiety of the Parisians—Bad news of the army—Evacuation of Holland—Dresden capitulates—Violation of the treaty—The Emperor indignant—His confidence in me—Death of the Count of Narbonne—Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg—The Emperor's opinion of M. de Narbonne—General Bertrand—Marshal Suchet—Ministerial changes—The Emperor's excursions—He recognises me in the crowd—His merriment—Their Majesties visit the Opera—Popular enthusiasm—Madame Grassini's special performance—The Emperor visits Saint-Denis—His two pages . 160

CHAPTER XIV

Anniversary of the coronation—The Emperor's love for France—His Majesty's popularity increases—Visit to the Faubourg Saint-Antoine—Public enthusiasm—It is misunderstood—Volunteers for the Guards—The Emperor at the Tuileries—The Emperor's last ally forsakes him—Armistice between Denmark and Russia—The French in Spain—Negotiations between the Duke of Vicenza and M. de Metternich—The Duke de Massa and the Legislative Body—Opening of the session—The Emperor's speech—Proof of Napoleon's wish for peace—Death of General Dupont-Derval—Pension for his widow—The Emperor's distaste for divorce and his respect for marriage 171

CHAPTER XV

Commissioners for the departments—Enemies on French soil—His Majesty and Ferdinand VII.—The Prince of Spain—Projected marriage—Measures adopted by the Emperor—Dantzig capitulates—Torgau surrenders—Bad news from the South—Instructions to the Duke of Vicenza—Baron Capelle and the commission of enquiry—Remarkable coincidence—The Paris National Guard—The Emperor commander-in-chief—Formation of the staff—Marshal Moncey—The Emperor eager to amalgamate all classes of society—Zeal of M. de Chabrol—M. Allent and M. de Sainte-Croix—The wooden leg—Eagerness of the citizens—Lack of arms—Army pensioners desire to re-enter the service 183

CHAPTER XVI

The campaign of miracles—A solemn promise broken—Violation of Swiss territory—The allies at Brisgau—Bâle bridge—French towns occupied by the enemy—The Emperor's energy—The Governor of Antwerp—The King of Naples deserts—Napoleon's anger—The eve of departure—The officers of the National Guard at the Tuileries—The Emperor's leave-taking—The Empress in tears—M. de Bourrienne at the palace—Colonel Bouland—A strange encounter—The old curé—We reach Brienne—Blücher runs away—He is thought

PAGE

to be a prisoner—Atrocious cruelty of the enemy—Rapes, thefts and incendiarism—Official lies—The Czar's callousness—La Rothière—Retreat on Troyes—The Emperor in imminent danger—The war of the Eagle and the Crows—Blücher's army 190

CHAPTER XVII

The Emperor repeats his Italian triumphs—His personal courage—His speech to the men—A shell bursts close to him—His broken rest—His kindliness towards myself—No peace with dishonour—I sleep in the Emperor's armchair—His Majesty avoids waking me—He is determined to make peace—The Emperor and the Duke of Bassano—Departure for Sézanne—The captive generals—Battle of Nangis—Blücher nearly made prisoner—The eve of the battle of Méry—We move towards Anglure—Méry on fire—Critical position of the allies and of M. Ansart—The Emperor's guide—How the bridge was built—The Emperor dying of thirst—His squalid head-quarters—Prisoners and colours despatched to Paris—Delicate mission of M. de Saint-Aignan—He is disgraced—Troyes capitulates—A rigorous decree—Execution of the Chevalier de Gonault . 205

CHAPTER XVIII

Negotiations for an armistice—Blücher and his men—Prince Schwartzenberg resumes the offensive—The Emperor ahead of Blücher—Halt at Herbisse—The good Curé—Strange lodging for the night—Marshal Lefebvre as theologian—Battle of Craonne—M. de Bussy—Brave Wolff and the Cross of Honour—Several generals are wounded—General Drouot's skill—Defence of the Russians—M. de Rumigny at headquarters—A secret conference—Small hopes of peace—Violent scene between the Emperor and the Duke of Vicenza—"You are a Russian!"—The Emperor's vehement language—A victory in prospect—March upon Laon—The French army surprised by the Russians—The Emperor's vexation—Rheims is taken—General Corbineau's bravery—The Russians quit Rheims—The inhabitants are resigned—Three days at Rheims—The young conscripts—General Janssens—The affairs of the Empire—The one man who is indefatigable 219

CHAPTER XIX

"The pear is ripe"—Fresh plan of attack—Departure from Rheims—Secret mission to King Joseph—Precautions respecting the Empress—The Czar arrives at Troyes—M. Moët gets the Cross—The enemy retreat—Battles of Fère Champenoise and Arcis-sur-Aube—The Emperor's first allusion to the Bourbons—Souvenir of Josephine—The enemy at Epernay—The Emperor at Saint-Dizier—M. de Weissemberg at headquarters—Message for the Emperor of Austria—He is forced to withdraw to Dijon—M. de Lavalette—News from Paris—The National Guard and the schools—Saint-Dizier recaptured—Blücher joins Schwartzenberg—News of King Joseph—Will Paris hold out?—General Dejean's mission—The Emperor leaves for Paris 236

CHAPTER XX

PAGE

Deplorable souvenirs—The foreigners in Paris—The Emperor leaves Troyes—Ten leagues in two hours—I am summoned to Fontainebleau—Arrival of His Majesty—The Emperor's dejection—Marshal Moncey at Fontainebleau—The Emperor taciturn—His troops his sole distraction—First review at Fontainebleau—"Paris! Paris!"—My house sacked by Cossacks—A present of 50,000 francs—The Emperor's increasing depression—Roustan forbidden to let the Emperor have firearms—The Emperor's extreme kindness to myself—A cheque for 100,000 francs—I convert it into gold—The source of all my troubles 242

CHAPTER XXI

Our position at Fontainebleau—The Emperor's dethronement deemed impossible—Numerous petitions—Effect of the newspapers upon Napoleon—The Duke of Bassano—The Emperor abdicates—His calmness at night-time—He takes poison—His resolve to die—M. Yvan leaves for Paris—Departure of Roustan—Marshal Macdonald's farewell—The sabre of Mourad Bey—The Emperor more talkative than usual—His variable moods—His disgust at letters from Paris—Remarkable instance of the Emperor's dejection—A fair lady at Fontainebleau—A night of suspense—An adventure at Saint-Cloud—I go to Bourg-la-Reine—Mother and daughter—Sad doings at Fontainebleau—The Emperor questions me—My frank reply—The Emperor's speech about the Duke of Bassano . 251

CHAPTER XXII

The Grand Marshal and General Drouot—His Majesty's fate—The commissioners of the allies—The Emperor's disgust—He prefers the English commissioner—Monotony of our stay in the palace—The Emperor becomes calmer—The eve of departure—The fatal hundred thousand francs—The Grand Marshal investigates—What I ought to have done—Inconceivable oversight on the part of the Emperor—I dig up the buried gold and return it to the Emperor—I quit the palace—Hubert comes to see me—I am offered three hundred thousand francs to accompany the Emperor—I lose my head—The Emperor departs—My grief—False construction put upon my conduct—M. de Turenne wrongfully accused—Examples of my disinterestedness—Refusal of four hundred thousand francs—Marchand, through me, enters the Emperor's service—His gratefulness 266

CHAPTER XXIII

My life of seclusion—I rarely read a newspaper—I begin to appreciate the Emperor's greatness—The Emperor lands—The good master and the great man—Uncertainty of my position—Souvenir of the Emperor's kindness—His Majesty asks for me—M. Marchand speaks up for me—My absence from Paris prolonged—The Emperor at the Tuileries—Circumstantial details—The Bourbon

PAGE

portraits—The mob at the Carrousel—"Long live the Emperor!"—A panic—General Excelmans and the tricolour—Arrival of the Emperor—The Archchancellor and Queen Hortense—Grand banquet—Marshal Bertrand's father—The Emperor and the dish of lentils—Two grenadiers of Elba—The power of sleep—His Majesty and his officers on half-pay—M. de Saint-Chamans—Review in the Carrousel—The Emperor and the people—General enthusiasm—My life as lonely as ever—Princess Catherine of Würtemberg and Prince Jerome—Thirteen at table—Death of Princess Eliza—The First Consul and Captain Godeau 277

CHAPTER XXIV

ADDITIONAL ANECDOTES 293

MEMOIRS

OF

CONSTANT

CHAPTER I

The Muscovites ask for alms—The Emperor distributes money and food—Days at the Kremlin—The Emperor's system of municipal government—A theatre built—A famous Italian singer—Talk of retreat—The Emperor prolongs his meals—The Comédie Française—Treaty between Murat and Kutusoff—The Kremlin churches stripped—Reviews—The Kremlin blown up by order of Napoleon—The Emperor on the road to Smolensk—The carrion-crows—The wounded at Oupinskoë—Their transport—The Emperor charged with cruelty—The Emperor's headquarters—The Cossacks—Mallet's conspiracy—General Savary—Arrival at Smolensk—The Emperor to the rescue—His untiring energy—Stragglers—Marshal Davoust's fury—Marshal Ney is found again—The Emperor's need of him—Prince Eugene weeps for joy—Marshal Lefebvre.

On the morning of the 18th of September we re-entered the Kremlin. The Palace and Foundling House were almost the only buildings that had

been left intact. Along the route thither, crowds of wretched Muscovites beset our carriages, and asked alms of us. They followed us right up to the palace, walking on the hot cinders and glowing, calcined stones. The most abject beggars among them went barefoot. It was harrowing to see these miserable wretches set their feet every now and then on some hot substance, and to hear their screams of pain. As all the roadway was taken up by our vehicles, the beggars in crowds thrust themselves almost under the horses' feet. In this way we could only advance very slowly, and were obliged to witness this fearful result of starvation and incendiarism. The Emperor caused food and money to be distributed among the sufferers.

When once more installed in the Kremlin, and when we had resumed our domiciliary habits, the days passed by peacefully enough. The Emperor seemed less sad, and this in turn reacted upon his suite. One might almost have said that he had just returned from his country-seat, and was about to settle down to town life again. If ever and anon the Emperor had such an illusion, it was speedily dispelled by the spectacle of Moscow, as viewed from the window of his apartments. Whenever Napoleon glanced at this scene, it was evident

that it deeply saddened him, though now he did not manifest signs of anger and impatience, as on the occasion of his former stay, until driven out by the devouring flames. Yet this was the moody, taciturn state of an anxious man, who knows not to what dire issues events may lead. At the Kremlin the days were tedious days of suspense, as Napoleon awaited the Czar's reply, a reply which never came. At this period I noticed that the Emperor always kept a copy of Voltaire's "Charles XII." on his little night-table.

Meanwhile His Majesty's genius for administration re-asserted itself, and as a relief to his military troubles and perplexities, he busied himself with municipal organisation. It had already been settled that Moscow should be adequately provisioned for the winter. A theatre was erected near the Kremlin, but the Emperor never went there. The company included certain unfortunate French actors who had been left stranded in Moscow in a state of abject destitution. His Majesty nevertheless encouraged the venture, hoping that such theatrical performances might prove a welcome pastime for the officers and men. Indeed, they were only patronised by soldiers. It has been stated that the leading Paris actors were engaged to appear, but of this I know nothing

positive. At Moscow there was then a famous Italian singer, who sang several times before His Majesty, but only in private. He had no connection with the theatrical company.

Until the 18th of October the time passed in discussions, more or less vehement, between the Emperor and his staff as to their final course of action. All were well aware that they would have to retreat, nor could the Emperor be blind to the fact, but it was plain that this struggle with his pride cost him a bitter pang. The few days preceding the 18th were the most dreary that I ever remember. In his most ordinary dealings with friends and councillors His Majesty's manner was frigid in the extreme, and he became most taciturn. Hours passed without one of the company uttering a word. Usually the Emperor took his meals with great despatch; now he dawdled over them in amazing fashion. Sometimes he would fling himself down on a sofa with a novel, which he either did or did not read, and he seemed absorbed in deep thought. Some verses were sent to him from Paris, which he read aloud, expressing his opinion briefly and incisively. I saw him devote three evenings to drawing up a list of regulations for the Comédie Française in Paris. It is difficult to conceive that

he could concern himself with such trivial matters while the future seemed so portentous. It was generally thought, and rightly enough, no doubt, that the Emperor had a political motive for such conduct, and that these regulations drawn up by himself personally, at a moment when Paris as yet knew nothing of the disastrous position of the French army, would make Parisians think that all could not be so very bad with the troops, since the Emperor had got time to attend to theatres.

On the 18th news came which put an end to all uncertainty. In the outer courtyard of the Kremlin His Majesty reviewed the men of Ney's division, distributing the Cross to the bravest of these, and addressing words of encouragement to all. All at once his aide-de-camp, young Béranger, brought news of a sharp encounter at Winkowo between Murat and Kutusoff. Murat's vanguard had been cut to pieces and our positions forced. It was plain that the Russians intended to resume hostilities. At first the Emperor was almost overcome with astonishment. Through Ney's troops, however, there passed a kind of electric thrill of enthusiasm and anger which delighted His Majesty. Transported to see how the shame of a repulse, though received without dishonour, fired these valiant

fellows with a desire for vengeance, the Emperor grasped their colonel's hand, went on with the review, commanded a muster of all the troops, and ere nightfall the whole army was on its way to Woronowo.

A few days before leaving Moscow the Emperor caused the churches to be stripped of their handsomest ornaments. The ravages of the fire made him rescind the order prohibiting pillage of this kind. The finest trophy was the huge cross of Ivan the Great. In order to get it down, part of the tower on which it stood had to be demolished. Even then it was only with the utmost difficulty that this huge iron mass could be disengaged. The Emperor had intended it to ornament the dome of the Invalides; but it was lost in the waters of Lake Semlewo.

The day before the Emperor was going to review the troops, the men seemed extremely anxious to clean themselves up and look smart, polishing their arms and kit in an endeavour to hide their seedy condition. The most imprudent among them had doffed their winter clothing, which they used as a receptacle for victuals. Many of them had worn their boots to shreds on the march. Yet one and all tried their best to present a smart appear-

ance on review days, and when in fine weather the sun made their guns and muskets glitter, the Emperor was gladdened by the reminiscence of his army's bygone splendour on the glorious day of its departure.

Twelve hundred wounded were left behind at Moscow; four hundred of these unfortunate sufferers were brought away with the last troops that left the city, Marshal Mortier being among these. At Feminskoĕ, ten leagues from Moscow, we heard the report of an awful explosion—the Kremlin had been blown up, in accordance with the Emperor's orders. In the cellars below the palace a train had been laid, and everything nicely calculated so that the explosion should not occur until a certain time had elapsed. Several Cossacks were plundering the palace, wandering about the desolate apartments with never a thought of what lay beneath their feet. They were blown to an enormous height. Thirty thousand rifles had been left behind in the fortress. In a second, part of the Kremlin was changed to a hideous mass of ruins, while part was preserved, a stone image of St. Nicholas escaping destruction also, which greatly served to raise this dignitary in the esteem of the Russian people. I got these facts from a trustworthy source; the person who told me

had himself heard Count Rostopchine relate them when he was in Paris.

On the 28th of October the Emperor set out for Smolensk, passing near the battlefield of Borodino. Nearly thirty thousand corpses lay strewn about these spacious plains. At our approach carrion-crows, which an abundant repast had drawn thither, flew up in black, croaking crowds. The bodies of all these brave fellows presented a revolting sight, and emitted a nauseous stench which not the bitter frost could neutralise. The Emperor hurried past as fast as he could, and that night slept in the well-nigh dilapidated castle of Oupinskoë.

Next day he visited some of the wounded who had been left behind in an abbey. On seeing the Emperor these poor fellows seemed to recover their strength and forget their pain. Horrible indeed must their sufferings have been, for their wounds grew worse with the increasing cold. When the Emperor appeared their drawn, tired faces took on a look of calm. Eagerly did they question their comrades as to all that had happened since Borodino, and when they knew that we bivouacked outside Moscow they were delighted. It was easy to see that what troubled them most was to think regretfully that they had not been able, like the

others, to light their camp-fires with the splendid furniture of the wealthy Muscovites. Napoleon gave orders that each conveyance of the suite should take one of these poor fellows, and we all gladly complied with an eagerness that greatly gratified the Emperor. Our new travelling companions gratefully declared that on these soft, warm cushions they were far more comfortable than in the ambulance-waggons, which was very likely. A lieutenant of cuirassiers, who had had his leg cut off, was placed in His Majesty's landau.

This is a reply to all the charges of cruelty gratuitously made against a great man who now is no more.

Among other things, to my disgust I have seen it stated that the Emperor used to drive over the wounded, being wholly callous to their shrieks of pain. This is a revolting falsehood. No member of the Emperor's suite could fail to have noticed his considerate kindness to the victims of the war, and the care shown to them. Friends or foes, foreigners or Frenchmen, he caused them all to enjoy the privilege of surgical aid from the medical staff of his own army.

From time to time frightful explosions caused us to look behind us. These were barrels of gun-

powder which were purposely blown up in this way, so as to get rid of them, as every day the march grew more trying. It was sad to think that we were reduced to such distress that we had to blow our powder to the winds rather than let the enemy have it.

On the 30th the Emperor's headquarters were established in a wretched hut, which had neither door nor windows. It was with great difficulty that we managed to keep out the draught from the room in which His Majesty slept. The cold increased and the nights were bitterly bleak; the little palings which served as relays for the post, and, placed at various distances, marked out the route, were also used every night at headquarters. The Emperor's bed was hastily made up there, and a sort of hastily improvised study erected, where he could transact business with his secretaries, and write his various despatches.

Our retreat was often harassed by bands of Cossacks, who charged at us, with lances at rest, and uttered howls more like those of a wild beast than of a human being. But they did us no damage. The infantry dressed closer, lowered their bayonets and smiled at these gibbering savages, while the cavalry, whose business it was to keep them at bay, soon sent them flying.

On the 6th of November, before leaving the army, the Emperor received news of the Mallet conspiracy, and of everything pertaining thereto. At first he was surprised, then very angry, and finally scoffed at the behaviour of Savary, the Minister of Police. He repeatedly said that if he had been in Paris, not a soul would have budged, and complained that he could never go away without everybody losing their head at the slightest disturbance. From that time forward he always kept harping upon the necessity of his presence in Paris.

On the 8th of November snow fell. The day was gloomy, and it was bitterly cold and gusty. The roads were so slippery that the horses, badly shod as they were, could hardly stand, and we had to push the wheels as hard as we could in order to get along at all. The Emperor, stick in hand, floundered along with the rest of us over the ice-bound roads; and for everyone he always had a cheery word. After a while we came in sight of Smolensk. The Emperor looked less fagged than any of us. His face was pale, but his features betrayed nothing of all his moral torture. Men and horses dropped out of the ranks in scores, the victims of hunger or of fatigue. The latter were greedily devoured by the starving troops.

At length, on the 9th, we reached Smolensk. The Emperor took up his quarters in a fine house on the New Square. Though since our previous visit the town had suffered greatly, it still had resources, and for the Emperor and his suite provisions of all kinds were found. But he set little store by such a privilege when he heard that the troops needed food and provender. On learning this he flew into a passion; I never had seen him so enraged before. He sent for the head official of the commissariat department, and rated him in terms so violent that the latter turned pale and could say not a word in self-defence. I heard the Emperor shouting as I was in the adjoining room, and I since learned that the official fell on his knees and begged for mercy. When the Emperor's anger passed, he pardoned him. Never had Napoleon shown such keen sympathy for the sufferings of his troops; never did he feel more bitterly his impotence to fight against such manifold ills.

On the 14th we resumed the route which some months before we had traversed under more favourable auspices. The thermometer registered twenty degrees of frost. Wide was the space that still separated us from France. After a slow and painful march the Emperor reached Krasnoi. He himself

was obliged with the Guards to get ahead of the enemy, in order to dislodge Prince Eckmühl. He marched right in front of the enemy's fire surrounded by the men of the Old Guard, who wrapped him in their tattered, bullet-riddled overcoats. This is one of the grandest examples which history affords of the devotion and the love of thousands of men for one of their sex. When the firing was hottest the band played the air "The Joys of Home," when Napoleon, interrupting, bade them strike up "Let's guard our Empire." The effect was grand.

From this fight the Emperor returned utterly exhausted. For several nights he had not slept, being busily engaged. Indeed, his amazing activity now found the fullest scope, nor had his dauntless courage ever seemed greater than now, in the midst of all these misfortunes for which he felt himself responsible.

It was between Orcha and the Borysthenia that the carriages which had no horses attached were burnt. So great was the general discouragement in the rear ranks that men threw away their firearms, which they found a tiresome and useless encumbrance. By order of the Emperor, a sort of military police was established to check disorderly

conduct as much as possible. Deserters were brought back by force, and often had to be goaded on at the sword's point. Such excessive suffering had demoralised the men, and the most wretched purposely fomented the spirit of revolt among their good-natured comrades, so as to get them to part with their cloaks or their rations. "Here come the Cossacks!" was their usual cry of alarm. When such base tactics were discovered, the hoodwinked took their revenge, and thus the flame of discord was fanned.

Marshal Davoust's forces suffered most. Of seventy thousand men, he had only four or five thousand, all starving. The Marshal himself was utterly destitute; devoid of linen, even of bread, hunger and exhaustion had made his face dreadfully haggard; it was pitiful to see him. This brave officer, who scores of times had escaped the bullets of the Russians, was now actually dying of hunger. When one of his men offered him a loaf, he greedily grabbed at it and devoured it in a trice. He was one of the worst grumblers, too. As he wiped his moustache, all stiffened by the frost, he furiously cursed the evil destiny that had brought them to this awful place, where it was thirty degrees below zero. Suffering such woes as

he did, it must have been hard to speak in measured terms of them.

For some time past the Emperor had felt extremely anxious as to the fate of Marshal Ney, who had been cut off, and had to fight his way through the Russians, who hemmed us in on every side. As time went on, fears for his safety increased. The Emperor kept constantly asking if Ney had not been seen, accusing himself of having exposed this brave general too recklessly, and making eager enquiries for him as for a dear friend lost. The whole army shared his uneasiness; in fact, it was as if none but Ney were in danger. Some regarded him as lost, and perceiving that the enemy threatened the bridges across the Borysthenia, proposed to destroy these. The whole army, however, offered loud opposition to such an act. On the 20th the Emperor reached Basanoni, and was dining with the Prince de Neufchâtel and the Duke of Dantzig, when General Gourgaud rushed in to inform His Majesty that Marshal Ney and his men were only a few leagues off. The Emperor was overjoyed, and could hardly believe that the news was true. M. Gourgaud gave him details which were soon known to the entire camp, where there was general rejoicing. As each

soldier told the news to his comrade, it was as if they had found their brother, and they extolled his heroic courage and the skill with which he had brought his troops safely through snow and ice and the enemy's pitiless fire. To the deathless fame of Marshal Ney be it said, that in the opinion of illustrious strategists, his defence was a feat of arms unparalleled in history. His Majesty often used to say, "I would give all the money I have stored in the Tuileries to get my brave Ney back to me."

It was Prince Eugene who had the honour of going to meet Marshal Ney with a body of 4,000 men. The danger of such a move was extreme; Prince Eugene fired a signal, to which Ney responded by beacon-fires, and ere long the troops met, when Marshal and Prince warmly embraced. They say that the latter actually wept for joy. Touches such as these help to relieve the deep and fearful gloom of the whole picture.

Until the Beresina was reached our march was one long series of petty skirmishes and immense privations. The Emperor spent one night at Caniwki in a wooden two-roomed hut. He occupied the ground-floor, while the servants slept upstairs anyhow. I was luckier, for I shared His Majesty's

room; but during the night my duties obliged me to go into the servants' room, when I had to step across the tired sleepers stretched here and there along the floor. I tried all I could not to hurt them, but so tightly packed were they that it was impossible to avoid treading on a leg or an arm.

During the retreat from Moscow the Emperor walked, wrapped in his pelisse, his headgear being a Russian cap, tied under the chin. I often walked beside brave Marshal Lefebvre, who was very fond of me. In his German-French he would say to me, when referring to the Emperor, "He's surrounded by a lot of blackguards who don't tell him the truth, and he cannot rightly distinguish his good servants from his bad ones. How will this dear Emperor of mine get out of all this? I am always afraid that his life is in danger; if, to save it, only my blood were needed, I would shed it every drop. Yet that would not help matters; and perhaps, too, he may still want me."

CHAPTER II

A council of war—The burning of the eagles—Russia gets only dust—The Emperor and the artillery—Generals Grouchy and Sebastiani—A surprise at Borizow—Victor and Oudinot—An officer's generous act—A pontoon bridge constructed across the Beresina—The Emperor's dejection—The enemy abandon their positions—The bridge breaks—Appalling scene—The Russian prisoners—Arrival at Malodeczno—The Emperor and M. de Caulaincourt—Marshal Davoust—The Emperor's agitation—He tells me of his scheme—His thoughtfulness for me—Impression upon the army made by the Emperor's departure—Birds frozen—The sleep from which there is no awaking — Horseflesh flavoured with gunpowder — Young Lapouriel—Arrival at Wilna—Prince d'Aremberg half-dead with cold—Burning the carriages—A night alarm—Loss of the treasury.

FEARFUL in its solemnity was the day that preceded the passage of the Beresina. The Emperor seemed to have made up his mind with the calm resolution of a man about to commit a desperate act. Nevertheless a council of war was held. It was then decided that the army should rid itself of all useless baggage which might impede its march. Never was there such unanimity among the councillors; never in their deliberations had they shown

greater calmness; it was the calmness of those who, once more with stout hearts, resign themselves to the will of God. All the eagles of the different army corps were brought to the Emperor and they were burnt; in his opinion, fugitives could do nothing less. It was, in truth, a mournful sight to see these men step out of the ranks one by one and fling down that which they loved more than life. Never had our army seemed so utterly broken-spirited, so filled with bitter shame, for this was like a general degradation of all the brave warriors of the Moskowa. For their Emperor these eagles were as a talisman; it was evident, then, that he had lost faith in them. His fortunes must indeed be at a low ebb for him to act thus; at least, it was some consolation for the soldiers to think that the Russians would only get their standards in the form of dust. It was a grim scene, this burning of the eagles, especially for those who, like myself, had been present at the splendid ceremony of their distribution in the Boulogne camp, before Austerlitz!

Horses were wanted for the artillery, and at this critical moment the artillery was the army's great safeguard. The Emperor gave orders for some of his own horses to be used, believing that the loss of one field-piece or an ammunition waggon would

be incalculable. The artillery was in the hands of officers only, and was only about five hundred strong. His Majesty was touched at seeing all these brave officers become privates again, handling the guns like ordinary soldiers, and going through all their drill out of sheer devotion. This squadron the Emperor called his "Sacred Squadron"; and, as the officers turned common soldiers again, so the other commanders forgot their rank and acted in a subordinate capacity. Among others, Generals Grouchy and Sebastiani resumed their old posts as captains.

Near Borizow we were stopped by loud cries. We thought at first that the Russians had cut us off. I saw the Emperor turn pale. We were all thunderstruck. Several lancers were sent on ahead to reconnoitre, and they galloped back waving their pennons. His Majesty knew the meaning of such signals, and exclaimed, "I will bet anything that that is Victor." It was indeed Marshal Victor, who had been impatiently awaiting our passing by. It seems that the Marshal's army had got very vague information as to our misfortunes, and thus was prepared to give the Emperor an enthusiastic welcome. His soldiers, still fresh and strong, at any rate when compared with the rest of the army, could not believe their eyes when they saw us in

this wretched state; yet loud were the shouts of "Long live the Emperor!"

When, however, the rear-guard of our army filed past, the scene became one of wild confusion. Those of the Marshal's troops who recognised some of their comrades ran out of the ranks, bringing them bread and clothes. They were horrified to see how voraciously they ate. Several embraced each other, weeping. One kind soldier took off his uniform and gave it to a comrade whose clothes were in tatters, while he himself put on a dirty old cloak, he being stronger and better able to withstand the bitter temperature. If misery pushed to excess warps the spirit, sometimes, as in this case, it raises it very high. Some of the poor wretches blew out their brains in despair. This, the final act suggested by Nature to put an end to misery, was performed with quite terrible resignation and nerve. Those who thus recklessly took their own lives were not so anxious to die as to have done once and for all with intolerable hardships, and throughout this disastrous campaign I saw what futile things were physical strength and courage if unsupported by moral force, the product of firm, inflexible will.

The Emperor marched between Marshal Victor's army and that of Marshal Oudinot. It was terrible

to see these moving masses gradually brought to a standstill, each halting in succession as Marshal Oudinot, for some reason or other, stopped marching. It was then that uneasiness showed itself throughout the ranks, and alarming rumours spread about, which, true or false, were readily believed. Nor did the general alarm abate until the vanguard recommenced its march.

On the 25th, at five o'clock p.m., the work of constructing a pontoon bridge across the Beresina was commenced, and this, so rumour stated, would be finished that night. The Emperor was much annoyed when fictions of this sort were circulated, knowing as he did how quickly discouragement follows upon vain hopes. Thus he was very careful always to keep the rear of the army exactly informed of every little incident, so as never to let the men cherish such cruel illusions. In a very short time the piles gave way, not having been firmly secured. There was nothing for it but to wait till the following morning, and the army gave way to further gloomy forebodings. Only at the close of this night of horrors were the first piles firmly fixed, and it is scarcely conceivable that men should have stood half-numbed, up to their chins in ice-cold water, fighting with that most terrible of enemies,

cold. Yet this is what our French pontooners did. Several of them were swept away by the current or frozen to death. Their end, as it seems to me, was to the full as glorious as any other.

The Emperor waited in a wretched cabin for day to dawn. In the morning he said to Marshal Berthier, "Well, Berthier, how are we to get out of this?" He was seated in his room, and great tears slowly rolled down both cheeks, which were paler than usual. Berthier had no answer to give; and the Emperor seemed utterly heart-broken. It was then that the King of Naples spoke frankly to his brother-in-law, and, in the name of the army, begged him to think of his own safety now that danger was so near. A company of gallant Poles offered to form the Emperor's escort. It was suggested that he might move higher up the Beresina, and in five days reach Wilna. The Emperor shook his head, but said nothing. The King understood, and the matter dropped.

In times of great misfortune, any slight benefit seems doubly welcome. Of this I had a thousand proofs when accompanying His Majesty and his luckless army. On the banks of the Beresina, just as the first piles of the pontoon bridge had been fixed, Marshal Ney and the King of Naples

galloped up in hot haste and shouted out to the Emperor that the Russians had abandoned their threatening position. Utterly beside himself with excitement, and unable to believe his own ears, I saw the Emperor rush forward and hastily survey the position said to be occupied by Admiral Tchitsakoff. It was true; and in a transport of joy, the Emperor, all breathless from running, exclaimed, "I have tricked the Admiral!"

It was difficult to understand this retrograde movement on the part of the enemy, when so good a chance was theirs of overpowering us, and I cannot tell if the Emperor, despite his apparent satisfaction, felt quite sure that such a retreat on the part of the enemy would really prove of real advantage to our army.

Before the bridge was completed, about four hundred men were removed in batches to the other side of the river on two frail rafts, which had hard work to make headway against the current and the large blocks of ice floating down stream. Among the first to cross were brave M. Jacqueminot, Oudinot's aide-de-camp, and Count Predzieczki. The latter was a brave Lithuanian to whom the Emperor was much attached, not least on account of his fidelity and devotion to our cause. They

both crossed the river on horseback, and the army gave a shout of admiration on seeing that their leaders were the first to give them an example of intrepidity. There was much indeed to daunt the stoutest heart. The current forced the poor horses to swim sideways, which doubled the length of the crossing. Then there were the blocks of ice which struck their flanks and breasts, making dreadful gashes.

At one o'clock General Legrand and his division commenced crossing the bridge constructed for the infantry. The Emperor was on the opposite bank. Some of the field-pieces caused a block in the passage of the troops, when His Majesty himself lent a hand to the gunners to right matters. At this the enthusiasm of the men was at its zenith, and they landed on the other side amid loud cries of "Long live the Emperor!"

Some time after this the Emperor heard that General Partonneaux had laid down his arms. He was much distressed, and somewhat unjustly loaded the general with blame. Later on, when better informed, he modified his opinion, for the brave general only resorted to this extreme measure when all that a man of valour could do he had done, and it is permissible to think twice before killing oneself uselessly.

While the artillery and baggage-waggons were crossing, the weight proved too great for the bridge, which broke. It was then that the fatal backward movement was made, which hurled back in awful fashion the vanguard upon the artillery in their rear. Another bridge had been hastily constructed as if it had been foreseen that the first would collapse, but the second was very narrow and without parapet of any sort. However, it was better than nothing. At first it was hailed as a godsend. Yet what disasters now ensued! As by this sudden retrogression the catastrophe became known, those who had led the way were now last in the wild struggle to reach the other bridge, and it was urgently necessary that the artillery should get across first. Accordingly, it dashed impetuously forward towards the only safe pathway that remained. Here the pen refuses to describe the hideous scenes which occurred. It was literally over a road of crushed corpses that the gun-carriages and other vehicles got to the bridge. How strong the instinct of self-preservation is, and what cruelty and ferocity it can arouse, was aptly shown by this dreadful episode. Some gunners, more brutal than the rest, stabbed their horses with their bayonets if these refused to obey the whip. Thus several ammunition-waggons were left mid-

way on the bridge owing to such a hateful expedient. I said that the bridge had no parapet. Many who strove to cross fell into the river and were drowned among the floating ice-blocks. Others clung to the rotten rafters of the bridge, and hung suspended above the abyss until their hands were crushed by the passing wheels, when they were forced to let go and perished miserably in the icy flood. Waggons loaded with ammunition fell into the water, as well as the horses and drivers.

Poor women were seen holding up their children above the water as if to delay for a few seconds their fearful death. The Emperor wished to turn back, hoping that his presence might restore order, but his officers sought so earnestly to dissuade him that he forbore to obey the dictates of his heart. It was certainly not his exalted rank which served to restrain him. How keenly he sympathised was evident by his incessant enquiries as to the passage of the troops, and if the guns could be heard rolling over the bridge, and if the death-shrieks had somewhat subsided. "How imprudent of them!" he exclaimed; "why couldn't they have waited a little?"

There were many examples of heroism in this awful catastrophe. A young artilleryman jumped into the river to save a poor mother and her two

children who had tried to cross the stream in a small boat. This was overweighted, and an enormous ice-block upset it. The gunner seized one of the children and, swimming vigorously, bore it in safety to the bank, but the mother and her other child were drowned. This good young fellow adopted the poor little orphan as his son, but if he ever had the luck to reach France I cannot tell.

Some of the officers themselves harnessed sledges in order to bring along some of their wounded companions, whom they wrapped up as warmly as they possibly could, comforting them with a glass of brandy when this could be got, and showed them touching attention.

The bridge was burnt at eight o'clock in the morning. On the 29th the Emperor left the banks of the Beresina, and we lay that night at Kamen, His Majesty being quartered in a wretched wooden hut. Nearly all the windows were broken, letting in blasts of icy air. We tried to stop them up with straw. Some little way in front of us, like cattle in a pen, the poor Russian prisoners lay encamped. I find it hard indeed to understand what joy of victory our soldiers could have felt in driving before them this flock of captives, who can but have been a hindrance. When the victors are starving, how

shall it fare with the vanquished! Thus it happened that most of the miserable prisoners died of cold and hunger that night. In the morning they were found huddled together, in a vain attempt to keep each other warm. The weakest had succumbed, and their stiffened bodies had been hugged all night by the living, who never knew that they were embracing the dead. Some there were who in their voracity devoured their frozen comrades. The heroic way in which the Russians bore pain has often been described. I can relate an incredible instance of this. One luckless prisoner having strayed from the ranks had been struck by a shell, which cut off both his legs and killed his horse. A French officer while reconnoitring along the river-bank spied at some distance a mass, which he took for a dead horse. But on looking closer he detected something moving. Coming close, he saw that it was the bust of a man whose legs apparently were hidden by the horse's belly. The unfortunate fellow had been there four days, making the brute's carcase at once his shelter and his food.

On the 3rd of December we reached Malodeczno. All that day the Emperor seemed pensive and uneasy. There were frequent private interviews with the head equerry, M. de Caulaincourt. I had

a suspicion that something extraordinary was on foot, nor were my conjectures wrong. When two leagues off Smorghoni, the Duke of Vicenza sent for me and told me to go on ahead and give orders, so that my *calèche*, being the lightest, might have six of the best horses harnessed to it, which were to be kept going the whole time. I got to Smorghoni before the Emperor, who did not arrive there till dusk. The cold was intense. His Majesty stopped at an inferior sort of house, took a light repast, wrote his twenty-ninth army bulletin, and summoned all his marshals to his presence.

As yet nothing was known of the Emperor's plan, but in final, desperate undertakings, there is always something unusual which does not escape the keen eye of the most observant. The Emperor had never been so affable and communicative. One felt that he desired to prepare his most devoted friends for distressing news. For a long while he spoke of vague things, then of the great achievements of the campaign, returning with pleasure to the subject of Marshal Ney's retreat, whom "at last they had found."

Marshal Davoust seemed anxious, and the Emperor observed, "Do say something, Marshal." Latterly there had been some little coolness between

him and Napoleon, and the Emperor had reprimanded him for the infrequency of his visits. But His Majesty could not dispel the cloud which darkened the faces of all, for his secret had not been as closely kept as he had hoped. After the meal was over the Emperor instructed Prince Eugene to read the twenty-ninth bulletin, and then he frankly explained his plan, adding that his departure was "essential in order to send help to the army." He gave orders to his marshals; all were sad and discouraged. It was ten o'clock at night when the Emperor said that it was time to go to bed, and, affectionately embracing all the marshals, he retired. He felt the need of such separation, for the interview had been a most trying one, to judge at least by his extreme agitation at its close. About half an hour later he called me into his room and said, "Constant, I am going away. I wanted to have taken you with me, but, on second thoughts, I will not do so, as several carriages might attract notice, and it is essential that I should not be delayed in any way. I have given orders for you to start as soon as my horses get back, so you will follow me at only a short distance." I was suffering greatly from my complaint just then; that is why the Emperor did not wish me to go on the box, as I

had requested, so that I might show him all the attention and care to which he was accustomed. "No, Constant," said he; "you shall follow me in a carriage, and I hope you will arrive not more than a day later than I shall."

He started that night, accompanied by the Duke of Vicenza, Roustan being on the box. My carriage was unharnessed, to my great regret; I was left behind.

Next morning at daybreak the army knew all, and the impression created by the news was indescribable. Discouragement touched its height. Many of the soldiers cursed the Emperor, upbraiding him for having abandoned them thus; there was one universal cry of malediction. The Prince de Neufchâtel was most uneasy, and asked everyone for news which he should have been the first to receive. He was afraid that Napoleon had been kidnapped by the Cossacks, for he had only a weak escort, and if his passage had been known, the utmost efforts would have been made to capture him.

On the night of the 6th the cold increased. It must have been very severe, for birds were found lying on the ground stiff and frozen. Some of the soldiers who had sat down with their heads bowed forward, so as to mitigate, if possible, the pangs of

hunger, fell asleep in this position, and never woke. When we breathed, our breath was frozen to our eyebrows, and tiny icicles clustered round the soldiers' beards and moustaches. To get these off the men used to put their faces close to the bivouac fires. It may be well imagined that many did not do so with impunity. The gunners sought to warm their hands at the nostrils of their horses, and horse-meat formed the soldiers' daily fare. They threw large slices of it on the coals, and the frost prevented it from going bad. It was rather like salted pork, gunpowder being used in lieu of salt.

That same night we had with us a young Parisian belonging to a very wealthy family. He had been desirous of entering the Emperor's service, and filled a position as under-footman. He was but a lad, and had never travelled before. On leaving Moscow he was seized with fever, and that evening became so bad that he could not be moved from the travelling carriage, but died there during the night. He was greatly regretted by all who knew him. Poor Lapouriel was of a charming disposition, well educated, and an only son, in whom the hopes of his parents were centred. The ground was so hard that we could not dig his grave, but, to our sorrow, were forced to leave his body lying there, unburied.

I started next morning, furnished with a special order from the Prince de Neufchâtel that all along the route I was to have horses in preference to anyone else. At the first stage after Smorghoni, whence the Emperor had started with the Duke of Vicenza, this order proved of the utmost service to me, for there happened to be only one relay of horses, and Count Daru and myself both wanted these. Needless to say, if the Emperor had not ordered me to rejoin him as soon as possible, I should never have exercised my right to go before the comptroller-general of the army, but as duty bade me do so, I showed my order to Count Daru, who said, "Quite right, M. Constant; you take the horses; but pray send them back to me as soon as possible."

How disastrous was this retreat! After manifold privations we reached Wilna. We had to cross a long, narrow bridge, in order to enter the town. The artillery and baggage-waggons blocked the road in such a way that no other vehicle could get past. But it was useless to say, "On His Majesty's service"; one only got curses in reply. Seeing how impossible it was to advance, I got out of my carriage, and then perceived that Prince d'Aremberg, the Emperor's orderly, was in a dreadful state, his

nose, ears and feet being frost-bitten. He was seated behind my carriage. I was perfectly shocked, and told him that if he had but informed me of his sad plight, I would have given him my place. He could scarcely reply. I supported him for some time, but seeing how urgently necessary it was for us both to get on, I determined to carry him along. He was slightly built and of medium height, so I took him up in my arms, and, with this burden, elbowing, pushing, shoving and shoved, I at last got to the King of Naples' headquarters, where I left the poor prince, bidding them pay him every attention. I then went to look after my carriage.

We were in want of everything. Long before we reached Wilna, as the horses were dead, we had been ordered to burn our carriages with everything they contained. I lost a good deal during this journey, for I had made some costly purchases, but these were burned with all my other luggage. Many things belonging to the Emperor were also destroyed in this way. A beautiful new carriage of Prince Berthier's, which had not yet been used, was burned with others. Round all such bonfires, four grenadiers stood with fixed bayonets to prevent anyone from trying to rescue anything from the flames. The carriages that had been saved were afterwards

searched in order to make sure that nothing had been kept back. I only managed to save a couple of shirts. We slept at Wilna. Next morning there was an alarming report to the effect that the Russians were at the gates of the city. Frightened folk rushed about screaming, "We are lost!" The King of Naples was suddenly roused, jumped out of bed, and in an instant the order was given for the Emperor's suite to start immediately. The general confusion may easily be imagined. There was no time to get any supplies of provisions, as we were forced to start off in a hurry like this. The Prince d'Aremberg was placed in a carriage, together with a few necessaries, and away we went. Hardly had we got outside the town than we heard great shouting behind us, and a noise of firing. We had to climb a mountain of ice. The horses were tired out, and we could not get on. The carriage containing the treasury had to be abandoned, and some of the money was stolen by folk who, a few yards further off, were forced to throw away their plunder in order to save their lives.

CHAPTER III

The Emperor badly lodged — Hovels full of vermin — The Emperor's apartment — The council-chamber — The Emperor's proclamation—Inhabitants of the Russian huts—The Emperor's tent — Marshal Berthier and the Emperor — A coolness — M. Colin, clerk of the kitchen — Roustan — The Emperor cannot sleep — His care for his hands — He is extremely sensitive to cold—A chapel demolished at Witepsk — Discontent of the inhabitants — A strange spectacle — The soldiers of the Guard bathe with females—Review of the grenadiers—General Friant—The Emperor gives him the fraternal embrace—Reply to false statements—Generals nibbling army biscuit — Officers and men share and share alike — Marauders — Straw pallets — M. de Bausset—How the Emperor's servants spent a night—I never once undress —Canvas sacks instead of beds—The Emperor's consideration for us—Vermin — We give up our mattresses to Russian officers.

THROUGHOUT the whole Russian campaign the Emperor was usually very badly lodged. However, he had to put up with it. Folk who were used to live in a palace certainly found it rather hard to bear. The Emperor bore it all bravely though, and the others accordingly followed his example.

Thanks to the system of incendiarism adopted

by Russia, the well-to-do inhabitants fled to their country estates and left their houses in ruins as a prize for the enemy. Truth to tell, all along the road to Moscow, with the exception of the more important towns, the buildings were wretched enough. After long, fatiguing marches we were very glad to find some hovel or other, which the Emperor chose as his headquarters. On vacating these squalid huts, the owners sometimes left two or three rickety chairs and wooden bedsteads, the abode of vermin for whom invasion has no terrors. The least filthy room was chosen, if that proved likewise the most airy. When the cold came, we certainly had a good supply of draughts. When a house had been selected, we used to put carpet down and the Emperor's bed was at once fixed up. On the shabby old table, the open dressing-case was placed containing everything which was necessary to a bedroom; it included a lunch-service for several people. All this luxury was displayed when the Emperor entertained his marshals at dinner. It became absolutely impossible to avoid lapsing into the domestic customs of petty provincial tradesfolk. If the house had two rooms, one served alike as bedroom and dining-room, the other being used as the Emperor's study. A bookcase, maps, a port-

folio, and a table covered with green cloth, formed the only furniture. This was the council-chamber. From such beggarly garrets it was that prompt and weighty decisions went forth to change the tactics of an army or the fortunes of a battle; vivid, energetic proclamations that quickly revived the soldiers' drooping spirits. If our apartments consisted of three rooms, which was rarely the case, then the third room was given to the Prince de Neufchâtel, who always slept as near the Emperor as possible. In these dilapidated houses we often found old, rotten furniture, and little pictures of saints on plaster or wood, which the owners had left behind them. Often, too, we found poor people in the huts, who, having nothing to save, remained where they were. These honest folk seemed much ashamed at not being able to receive the Emperor of the French in better style. They gave us all they could, and yet we were disgusted with them. The Emperor while in Russia was more often entertained by the poor than by the rich. The Kremlin was the last Royal palace occupied by His Majesty during the Russian campaign.

If there were no houses to be found on the road, the Emperor's tent was erected, this being curtained off into several apartments. In one the

Emperor slept; another was his study; a third was occupied by the aides-de-camp and officers of the suite. This room was usually used as a dining-room by the Emperor, his meals being prepared outside. I slept in the room, and Roustan, who was in attendance upon the Emperor when he rode out, slept in the lobby. The secretaries slept either in the lobby or the other rooms. The heads of the household department got their meals when and where they could, and were not above eating with their fingers, just like common soldiers.

Prince Berthier had a tent next to the Emperor's, and always breakfasted and dined with His Majesty. They were two inseparable friends—a most charming intimacy that hardly ever flagged. Yet once, I believe, there was a little unpleasantness between the Emperor and the Marshal when His Majesty was about to leave the army of Moscow. The old Marshal desired to accompany him, but the Emperor refused to allow him to do so, and there was rather a sharp discussion, which, however, had no consequences.

During the campaign meals were served by M. Colin, clerk of the kitchen, or else by Roustan and a *valet de chambre*.

During this campaign more than on any other

the Emperor used often to rise at night, put on his dressing-gown and work in his study. Often he had attacks of insomnia, for which he found no cure. Then, as lying in bed became insupportable, he jumped up, took a book and walked up and down, reading. When his head felt somewhat refreshed he lay down again. He rarely had two successive nights of unbroken sleep. Frequently he remained at work in his study till dressing-time, when he came back to the bedroom and I proceeded to dress him. The Emperor was very careful of his hands. But it often happened that during this campaign he had to forego indulging such a fad. When it was very hot he no longer wore gloves, as he found these very uncomfortable. Thus, by exposure to the sun, his hands became very brown. When cold weather came, what before was a touch of dandyism became a healthful precaution. He bore cold with great courage, yet it was easy to see that he was physically very much affected by it.

It was at Witepsk that the Emperor, finding the space before his house too cramped for a review-ground, caused several of the more dilapidated buildings to be pulled down. There was an old ruined chapel which, among other structures, had to be demolished; in fact, it was just being knocked

down, when the inhabitants came up in large numbers and indignantly protested against such a proceeding. When, however, the Emperor allowed them to take away all the sacred relics from the chapel, they grew calmer. In consequence of such permission, several entered the holy edifice, and we saw them coming out, bringing in great pomp their big wooden saints, which they placed in other churches.

In this town we witnessed a singular spectacle —one somewhat calculated to shock our sense of decency. During several days of extreme heat we saw the townsfolk, male and female, run down to the riverside, undress in company with perfect self-possession, and then bathe together, naked and unabashed. Some of the Guards thought it fun to have a dip, too, and join the fair bathers, of whom there was a goodly show. But as our soldiers did not exhibit as much calmness and restraint as the ladies, and as things were going just a little bit too far, the worthy folk at last discontinued this pleasant pastime of bathing, much annoyed that it should be made a matter for mirth, since they themselves looked upon it as a grave and wholly serious rite.

One morning I was present at a grand review of the foot-guards. All the regiments seemed in a

high state of glee. This was because of the appointment of General Friant to the post of commander of the corps. The Emperor himself gave him the customary fraternal embrâce. It was the only time I ever saw His Majesty do so during a campaign. As the general was much beloved by the army, loud cheering greeted this condescension on the part of the Emperor. Promotion usually provoked great enthusiasm among the men, for the Emperor always contrived to endow such ceremonies with due solemnity and grandeur.

Many persons think that it was enough to be near the Emperor in order to be perfectly comfortable, even in war-time. That is a great mistake, which the kings and princes who followed His Majesty to the wars could correct. If personages so highly placed wanted the most ordinary commodities, it may well be thought that their servants fared badly. The Emperor himself often went without common necessaries, which, after such days of incessant fatigue would have been most grateful to him. When camping out, it was a sort of lodge-where-you-can system that prevailed. The poor destitute soldier was never tantalised by the sight of his superiors indulging in luxurious extravagance. The first generals in the army munched their contract

bread with just as much zest as the mere privates. During the retreat, privation was never more universal. This idea of a misfortune shared by all aptly served to stimulate the energies and the hopes of the most despondent. It may also be said that never had such deep sympathy existed between officers and men. Of this a thousand examples could readily be given.

When evening came, camp-fires were lighted, and the luckiest of the marauders invited comrades to share their booty. When times were bad, the standing dish, not by any means a bad one, was grilled horse-flesh. Many of the men would deny themselves, and give their plunder to their chiefs. Selfishness was not so general but that one could catch occasional glimpses of that noble French courtesy which recalled bygone days of prosperity. Straw was the common bed for all, and marshals, princes, dukes, who in Paris slept on downy feather beds, did not find a pallet of straw too hard for them in Russia.

M. de Bausset gave me a humorous account of one of these nights, where, lying cramped up anyhow, in a very narrow room, the Emperor's aides-de-camp, when summoned by His Majesty, stepped ruthlessly on the limbs of their sleeping comrades,

who, luckily, were not all of them subject to gout like M. de Bausset. When thus danced upon, he shrieked out, "Why, it's a regular butcher's shop!" and drew in his legs, huddled up in a corner until this reckless running to and fro had ceased.

Picture to yourself, reader, large rooms, both dirty, bare and draughty, their walls dilapidated and harbouring a fetid air. In the middle of the apartment is a large litter of straw as if for horses, and on this litter lie men, shivering with cold, cuddling up one against another, murmuring, cursing, some not able to close an eye, and others snoring their loudest. In the midst of this jumble of legs and feet cries of alarm are heard at night, when an order from the Emperor comes. Picture all this and you will have some idea of the hostelry and its inmates.

As for myself, all through the campaign I never once undressed to get into bed, for beds were nowhere to be found, and substitutes had consequently to be invented. Necessity, as everyone knows, is the mother of invention. We had great sacks made of rough canvas, into which we thrust our whole bodies, and then lay down on a heap of straw, if we were lucky enough to get one. For months this was the way I used to get to sleep. For several successive

nights I was denied such repose, being continually called up to wait on the Emperor.

If one considers that all these petty hardships were renewed from day to day, and that when night came we had not even a bed on which to rest our jaded limbs, some idea may be formed of the onerous nature of our duties. Never did the Emperor utter the slightest murmur of impatience, however much he was tried. His example gave us all great courage, and at last we grew so used to this wearisome nomadic life that, in spite of cold and every other hardship, we were wont to joke about our close quarters. The Emperor was never upset, except at the sight of the sufferings of others. Frequently he became so unwell that we were seriously uneasy, particularly if he denied himself sleep. Yet I always used to notice how he kept asking for information as to all that was going on, and if there was sleeping room for everybody. When informed of every detail his peace of mind was restored.

Although the Emperor nearly always had his own bed, the wretched hovels in which this was erected were often so filthy that, despite every precaution, I found vermin in his clothes of a sort that is only too common in Russia. We, more than he, had to suffer from such an annoyance, being deprived

of clean linen or any change of clothes, as most of our dress had been burnt with the carriages containing them. There were good reasons for adopting this extreme measure. All the horses died of cold or hunger.

In the palace of the Czars our beds were no whit more comfortable than when we lay round the camp-fires. For some days we had mattresses, but these were wanting to many of the wounded officers, and the Emperor had ours given to them. We made such sacrifice with a right good heart, and the thought that we were easing others more unfortunate than ourselves made us deem the hardest pallets pleasant; indeed, all through this war we had many an opportunity of learning to put all feeling of self aside and to ignore personal advantage. Did we ever forget ourselves in this respect, the Emperor was always there to remind us of so simple and easy a task.

CHAPTER IV

Publication in Paris of the 29th Bulletin—Two days' interval and arrival of the Emperor—Marie Louise and Josephine—The resources of France—The Emperor's personal influence—I leave Smorghoni—The King of Naples assumes command—Route taken by the Emperor—Hopes of the Poles—I reach the Tuileries—The Emperor sends for me—His kindly welcome—The Empress's coldness—Queen Hortense—The Emperor's questions—I resume my duties—The Emperor and the Mallet business—Everyone in mourning—Their Majesties at the Opera—Talma and Geoffroy—No New Year's gifts—The Emperor in Paris with Duroc—His passion for buildings—Frequent shooting parties—The English newspapers.

THE all too famous 29th Bulletin of the Grand Army was not published in Paris until the 26th of December, where it provoked a deep feeling of consternation among all classes, and the Emperor, following close upon this solemn manifesto of our disasters, reached his capital forty-eight hours later, as if to paralyse by his presence the evil effect of such a document. On the 28th, at half-past eleven that night, His Majesty arrived at the Tuileries. It was the first time that Paris saw him come back

from a campaign without bringing with him a fresh peace which the glory of his arms had won. On this occasion all those persons who looked upon Josephine as the Emperor's talisman and the guardian of his fortunes did not fail to note that the Russian campaign was the first which had been undertaken by the Emperor since his marriage with Marie Louise. Without being superstitious, it cannot be gainsayed that if the Emperor was always great, even when Fortune was adverse, there was a very marked difference between the reigns of the two Empresses. One only saw victories followed by peace, and the other only experienced wars not inglorious, but ineffectual, until there came the last dire result in the abdication at Fontainebleau.

But it is anticipating events to dwell upon misfortunes that only a few men at that time dared to predict, even after the disasters of Moscow. No one could deny that the intense cold had helped more to bring about our reverses than the enemy, whom we had been forced to seek right in the heart of flaming Moscow. Immense were still the resources of France, and the Emperor was there to employ these to the utmost advantage. As yet no feeling of revolt was manifest, and with the exception of Spain, Sweden, and Russia, the Emperor

could count all the other continental powers as allies. It is true that the moment was approaching for General Yorck to give the signal, for, if I remember rightly, the first news reached the Emperor about the 10th of the following January, and it was easy to see that His Majesty was deeply affected by it, well foreseeing that Prussia would not fail to have imitators.

The Emperor, as already stated, had left me at Smorghoni, driving on with the Duke of Vicenza, in the *calèche*, which had originally been intended for myself. To get out of this dreadful squabble was everybody's one thought. Yet I can remember that after the first feeling of regret that the Emperor was no longer in the midst of his gallant officers, the sense that he was safe was the dominating one, for all had such deep trust in his genius. On leaving, he entrusted the King of Naples with the chief command, whose valour all the troops admired, though certain marshals, so I have heard it said, were jealous of his crown. I since learnt that the Emperor reached Warsaw on the 10th, avoiding Wilna, and, after travelling through Silesia, he got to Dresden, where the good King of Saxony, ill as he was, gave him welcome. His Majesty then proceeded by way of Nassau and Mayence. This route

I also took, but travelled slower, although I did not lose time. Everywhere, and especially in Poland, whenever I stopped, I was astonished to find such care shown for my safety. I always heard it stated that the Emperor was coming back at the head of an army of three hundred thousand men. The Emperor had already done such amazing things that this did not seem impossible, and I found that it was he himself who had spread about such reports as he went along, in order to quicken popular spirit. In many places I found it hard to get any horses; and, eager though I was, I did not reach Paris until six or eight days after the Emperor.

I had scarcely alighted from the carriage than the Emperor, hearing of my arrival, sent for me. I told the messenger that I was scarcely in a fit state to enter the Royal presence. He answered, "That does not matter; the Emperor wants you to come at once, just as you are." I instantly obeyed, and hurried to the Emperor's study, where I found him with the Empress and Queen Hortense. The Emperor most graciously welcomed me. He seemed very merry, and as if he had recovered from all his fatigues. I was about to withdraw, when His Majesty said, "Constant, stop a moment. Tell me all that you saw on your journey." I told him

some of the grim sights I had witnessed; of the dead, the dying, and the wretched human beings struggling hopelessly against hunger and cold. "Well, well, my lad, you go and rest," said he. "You must want it. To-morrow you shall resume your duties."

This I did next day, and found the Emperor absolutely the same as he had been before entering upon this campaign. One might have said that the past was as nothing to him, and that living now in the future he saw victory once more smile upon his standards, and his enemies humiliated and conquered. He was now more concerned about General Mallet's insurrection than about anything else. As for me, I will not disguise the fact that I was deeply pained at seeing everyone in mourning in the streets, mostly the wives and sisters of our brave fellows whose bones now whitened the dreary Russian steppes. But I forbore to express this feeling.

A few days after my return to Paris, Their Majesties were present at a performance of *Jerusalem Delivered*, at the Opera. I was there also, in a box which M. de Rémusat had kindly given me, and witnessed the reception accorded to Their Majesties. This was of the most enthusiastic nature; and I am bound to admit that my transition from the Beresina

to this brilliant spectacle was almost magically abrupt. The performance took place on Sunday. I left shortly before its conclusion, so as to be home before the Emperor. I got there in time to undress him, and I recollect that the Emperor talked to me about the recent quarrel between Talma and Geoffroy. Though he was very fond of Talma, the Emperor adjudged him to be entirely in the wrong, and kept repeating, "An old man! an old man! It's unpardonable!" Then he smilingly added, "Why, bless me, don't they run me down, too? Haven't I got my critics, too, who show me no mercy? He should not have been any more susceptible than myself."

The affair, however, passed off without any disagreeable consequences for Talma, for, as I say, the Emperor was very fond of him, loading him with presents and pensions.

Talma, in this respect, was among a privileged few, for giving presents was not precisely the Emperor's strong point, particularly presents to the members of his household. It was getting close upon New Year, but none of us ever expected to receive anything, and we all knew that we should only have our salaries and nothing more. It was specially difficult for me to economise, for the

Emperor always wanted me to be extremely well dressed. Strange indeed was the spectacle of the master of half Europe condescending to concern himself with the dress of his valet. Such was his interest herein that whenever he saw me in a new coat which he liked, he invariably complimented me upon it, adding, "You look very handsome, M. Constant!"

On the occasion of the Emperor's second marriage and when the King of Rome was born, none of Their Majesties' private attendants received gifts or presents of any sort. The Emperor found that the expenses on both occasions were too heavy. Once, however, though no special event prompted him to do so, the Emperor, when I had finished dressing him, said to me, "Constant, go and see M. Menneval; I have instructed him to buy you £1,800 worth of shares. As a matter of fact, I only got £1,700 worth, which, soon afterwards, I sold again; and it was with the profits of this sale that I purchased a small property in the forest of Fontainebleau.

Sometimes the Emperor made presents to the princes and princesses of his family; I was almost always chosen as the bearer of such gifts, and, with one or two exceptions, my functions as messenger

were quite unremunerated. Queen Hortense and Prince Eugene were never included, as far as I know, in such generosity; Princess Pauline, however, was the most favoured of all.

Despite his numerous engagements, the Emperor now appeared more frequently in public than before. He often went out unattended. On the 2nd of January, 1813, for instance, I remember that he went to visit the basilica of Notre Dame, the Archbishop's palace, the central wine depôt, the granaries, the Elephant Fountain, and the Bourse, which last the Emperor often styled the finest monument in all Europe.

After war, public buildings were what the Emperor most liked. In fact, such liking amounted to a passion. While making excursions of this kind the cold proved very severe, though, after Russia, it seemed almost mild.

I noticed at this time, that is to say, at the end of 1812 and the beginning of 1813, that the Emperor had never been out shooting so often before. Twice or thrice a week I helped him into his uniform, and the Empress used to accompany him in her *calèche*, in spite of the bitter weather. If he had once settled a thing, it was useless to argue. Knowing how little the Emperor generally seemed to care

about sport, I was surprised at this sudden change of taste; but I afterwards found out that the Emperor was acting from motives of policy. Once, when Duroc was in the room, as the Emperor was donning his gold-laced uniform, I heard him say to the Marshal, "It behoves me to bestir myself and show myself everywhere, so that the papers may mention this, since those stupid English newspapers say every day that I am ill and can't move; in fact, that I am good for nothing. Wait a bit! I'll soon show them that I am as sound in body as I am in mind."

CHAPTER V

Hunting at Grosbois—The Empress and her ladies—Unexpected journey—The route to Fontainebleau—Agreement with the Pope—Distribution of favours—The Cardinals—The Pope regrets his act—Marshal Kellermann—The Emperor on Rome ancient and modern—His Majesty's views as to the Pontificate—Return to Paris—Offer of escort—The Emperor's plans—Paris the handsomest city in the world—The Emperor and M. Fontaine—Scheme for building an Italian embassy—The Emperor and the King of Rome's palace—He enters into details—The Elysée he finds disagreeable and the Tuileries uninhabitable—His passion for building increases—The King of Rome at a review—Enthusiasm of the people and of the soldiers—The Emperor greatly pleased at this—M. Fontaine is again questioned—My salary doubled.

On the 19th of January the Emperor sent word to the Empress that he was going to shoot over the Grosbois covers, and would lunch with the Princess de Neufchâtel, and he invited Her Majesty to join him. The Emperor also told me to come to Grosbois to help him in changing his linen after the day's sport was over. The party

took place as arranged, but to everyone's surprise the Emperor, instead of returning to Paris, gave orders to drive on to Fontainebleau. The Empress and her suite had only their hunting-dresses, and the Emperor was rather amused at witnessing their discomfiture at being thus deprived of all feminine articles for their toilette. Before leaving Paris the Emperor had given orders to have everything which the Empress might require sent on post-haste to Fontainebleau, but the ladies-in-waiting were less fortunate.

It was soon discovered that this shooting-party and luncheon at Grosbois was only a pretext, and that the Emperor's real intention had been personally to settle the existing differences between himself and the Pope. When all had been prepared and arranged, the Emperor and the Pope signed on the 25th an agreement or so-called *Concordat*, which was admitted to be most satisfactory for both parties; and was duly signed in the presence of a brilliant assemblage of cardinals, bishops, officers, and others. Cardinal Doria acted as master of the ceremonies, and it was he who witnessed the signature of the document.

I can hardly speak of all the congratulations given and received, all the pardons solicited and

obtained, the relics, decorations, chaplets, and snuff-boxes mutually distributed. Cardinal Doria received from His Majesty's own hand the Gold Eagle of the Legion of Honour. The Grand Eagle was also given to Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo. Cardinal Maury, the Bishop of Nantes, and the Archbishop of Tours received the Grand Cross of the Order of the Re-union; the Bishops of Evreux and Trèves got the Cross of officers of the Legion of Honour, and finally, the Cardinal of Bayonne and the Bishop of Evreux were made senators by His Majesty. Dr. Porta, the Pope's physician, received a pension of twelve thousand francs, and the Papal Nuncio who drew up the articles of the *Concordat* received a splendid diamond ring.

His Holiness had hardly signed the agreement when he repented having done so. This is what the Emperor told Marshal Kellermann when he saw him at Mayence at the end of April:

"The day after the signature of the famous *Concordat* of Fontainebleau the Pope was to have dined with me, but on the previous night he became ill, or else pretended to be so. He was as gentle as a lamb, and a thorough good fellow, of whom I am very fond, and who likes me a little, too, I am sure.

"Would you believe it?" continued His Majesty; "he wrote to me a week later to say that he was very sorry he had signed the document, that his conscience pricked him for having done so, and he begged me to consider the *Concordat* as null and void. It seems that immediately after I left him he fell into the hands of his habitual counsellors, who scared him out of his life by telling him what he had done. Had we been alone I could have made him do just what I liked. I replied that what he asked me to do was contrary to the interests of France; besides, as he was infallible, he could not possibly have made a mistake, and that his conscience was all too ready to be alarmed.

"As a matter of fact, how different was ancient Rome from the Rome of to-day? Overwhelmed by the consequences of the Revolution, could it raise itself and hold its own? A vicious system of political government had succeeded the old Roman legislation, which, without being perfect, was yet fitted to form great men of all kinds. Modern Rome has applied to political government principles which in religious orders may deserve respect, and had developed these in a manner fatal to the welfare of peoples.

"Thus charity is the most perfect of the

Christian virtues. One should be charitable, then, to all those who are in need of charity. This is why Rome has become a receptacle for the dregs of all nations. There, as they tell me (for I have never been there), you may see all the loafers of the universe, who have taken refuge in the Holy City, feeling sure that they would find food and alms in abundance. Thus it is that the Papal territory, destined by Nature to produce immense riches, by its position under a gladsome sky, by its manifold streams and fertile soil, languishes for want of proper cultivation. Berthier has often told me that one may pass through large tracts of land which bears no trace of human culture. The women even, who count as the handsomest in Italy, are indolent, and show no zeal or activity for the ordinary business of life; in fact, theirs is the lazy effeminacy of Asia. Modern Rome has merely maintained a certain pre-eminence in matters of art by reason of the marvellous treasures that she possesses. But this pre-eminence we have somewhat lessened: the Museum is enriched with all those masterpieces of which she is so vain; and soon the beautiful edifice of the Bourse, now being constructed in Paris, will surpass anything of its kind in Europe, ancient or modern.

"France before everything. To return to politics. What could the actual Papal government be when confronted with the great sovereignties of Europe? Little old Sovereigns used to succeed to the Pontifical throne in an age when all that one desired was peace. Nowadays one only thinks about enjoying one's greatness and in letting it reflect upon one's family. A Pope only acquires sovereignty with a spirit shrivelled by a long course of intrigue, and fearful lest he make for himself powerful enemies, who may hereafter wreak their vengeance upon his family, for his successor is always unknown. In short, he only desires to live and die peacefully. For one Sixtus V. how many Popes were there not whose only care was for trivial, petty things, as uninteresting from a religious point of view as, politically considered, they were contemptible? This, however, is a subject which would lead us too far."

Since his return from Moscow His Majesty, with matchless activity, proceeded to take measures to stop the invasion of the Russians, who, joined by the Prussians after General Yorck's desertion, were become a most formidable enemy. Fresh levies had been ordered. For two months past numerous tenders had been made and accepted for horses and men from all towns in the Empire, as

well as from governing bodies and private individuals of rank and wealth. The Imperial Guard was re-organised by the brave Duke de Friuli, who, alas! a few months later, was taken from his numerous friends.

In the midst of such grave occupation, His Majesty never lost sight of his favourite plan to make Paris the handsomest city in the world. A week never passed without architects submitting plans to him, making reports, &c.

One day, when looking at the Guards' barracks, a black sort of smoke-stained shed, the Emperor said to M. Fontaine:

"It's a shame to erect buildings as hideous as those of Moscow. I ought never to have allowed such a place to be built. Are you not my architect-in-chief?"

Whereupon M. Fontaine excused himself by saying that he had nothing to do with Paris buildings, and that he certainly had the honour of being the Emperor's head architect, but only for the Tuileries and the Louvre.

"True," rejoined His Majesty; "but instead of that timber-yard yonder," and he pointed to the quay, "which looks very ugly just here, could there not be an embassy built for the Italian minister?"

M. Fontaine said that this was quite feasible, but that it would cost three or four millions.

Then, apparently, the Emperor gave up this idea, and, thinking of the Tuileries gardens, perhaps on account of General Mallet's conspiracy, he ordered all the doors of the palace to be made in such a way that one key would open them all.

Some days afterwards the Emperor sent to M. Fontaine and M. Costaz the following note, a copy of which has fallen into my hands. That morning His Majesty had been to see the buildings at Chaillot.

"It is time to discuss the question of a palace for the King of Rome.

"I do not wish to be involved in ruinous expense. I want a palace smaller than Saint-Cloud, but larger than the Luxembourg.

"By the time the sixteenth million has been spent, I should wish to be able to inhabit it; in this way I shall get some enjoyment from such a residence, whereas if something too pretentious be erected, like the Louvre, which is not yet finished, my advantage will be nil.

"The work of plantation must first be begun, and the limits of the estate defined and enclosed.

"I desire this palace to be rather handsomer

than the Elysée, which did not cost eight millions to build, and yet it is one of the finest palaces in Paris. The King of Rome's palace must rank second only to the Louvre, which is a large palace. It is only to be as a sort of summer residence for Paris, as in winter it will always be preferable to stay at the Louvre or the Tuileries.

"I can hardly believe that Saint-Cloud cost sixteen millions.

"Before the plans are submitted to me for inspection, I beg that they be carefully considered and revised by the Committee of Public Works, so that I may be assured that the sum of sixteen millions has not been exceeded. I do not want a chimera, but something real for myself, not merely that shall please the architect. To finish the Louvre shall be for him glory enough. When once the plans are accepted I will carry them out at full speed.

"I do not like the Elysée, and the Tuileries is uninhabitable. Nothing can please me unless it is extremely simple and built in accordance with the simplicity of my tastes and way of life. Thus this palace will prove of use to me. I want it to be a kind of amended *Sans-Souci*. Above all things, I should like the palace to be more beautiful and comfortable than the gardens, two conditions that

are incompatible, so that from my apartment I can walk out into the garden and the park, as at Saint-Cloud. But at Saint-Cloud there is this inconvenience that the park is separate from the house.

"The aspect must also be considered, so that my rooms may look north or south, and I can change them according to the climate.

"My apartments must be specially sumptuous, like those at Fontainebleau.

"They must be close to the Empress's, and on the same floor.

"In short, I want a palace for a convalescent, a home for a man who is getting old. I want a little theatre, a small chapel, &c., and, above all, be very careful that there is no stagnant water round about the palace."

This taste for building was now indulged to excess by His Majesty, and he was like the most energetic of architects, in haste to execute his plans, and more jealous than any of his own special ideas on the subject. Yet his scheme for building the King of Rome's palace on the Chaillot heights was not entirely his own; M. Fontaine may fairly lay claim to the greater part of this.

One morning in March the Emperor took his son to a review in the Champs de Mars, when

popular enthusiasm was roused to its acme, nor could its sincerity be questioned, for such cheering came straight from the heart. The Emperor was much moved thereby. He came back to the Tuileries in the best of tempers, and repeatedly kissed his little son, proudly pointing out to M. Fontaine what an intelligent, indeed, precocious child he was.

"He was afraid of nothing," said His Majesty; "I expect he knew that all those brave fellows were my friends."

That day the Emperor talked for a long time with M. Fontaine, playing meanwhile with the little King, whom he held in his arms. The conversation turned upon Rome and its monuments. M. Fontaine spoke in terms of profound admiration of the Pantheon. The Emperor asked if he had ever lived in Rome, and M. Fontaine replied that he had been there three years.

"It is a city that I have not seen," said the Emperor; "I shall certainly go there some day. It is the little King's city," and he glanced proudly at the child in his arms.

When M. Fontaine had gone, the Emperor, beckoning me to approach, began pulling my ears, which he always did when in a good humour. After

sundry personal questions, he asked me what my salary was.

"Sire, it is six thousand francs."

"And how much does M. Colin get?"

"Twelve thousand."

"Twelve thousand francs? Why, that's not fair; you ought not to have less than M. Colin. I'll see about that."

And His Majesty actually made immediate enquiries, but was informed that the year's accounts had already been made up. Then the Emperor told me that until the end of the year, Baron Fain would give me from the privy purse the sum of five hundred francs monthly, as His Majesty wished my salary to be the same as that of M. Colin.

CHAPTER VI

Murat leaves for Naples—Eugene assumes command—Headquarters at Posen—The wreck of an army—More disquieting news—Resolve to depart—The Empress regent—Our departure for Erfurt—Visit to the Duchess of Weimar—The Emperor pleased with his reception—The Emperor's house—Eckhardtsberg transformed into headquarters—Arrival at Lützen—Death of the Duke of Istria—Napoleon's letter to the Duchess—The King of Saxony erects a monument—The young recruits—Ney's opinion of them—The Prussians commanded by their King in person—His Majesty enters Dresden—An explosion—The Emperor slightly wounded—General Flahaut's mission—The Emperor of Austria's congratulations—M. de Bubna at Dresden—The Emperor does not rest—His ability to sleep—Battle of Bautzen—The Saxon populace—The recruits are inadvertently wounded—The Emperor admits his having been unjust.

WHEN the Emperor left the army, he entrusted the King of Naples with the chief command, who, however, abandoned this and returned to Italy, appointing as his successor Prince Eugene. The Emperor was very eager to get news from Posen, where headquarters were established towards the latter end of February, but Prince Eugene, the viceroy, had now but the wreck of an army to

command, and some of the regiments only mustered a handful of men.

Thus, whenever the Russians appeared in force, there was nothing for it but to retreat, and all through the march the news became increasingly disquieting. The Emperor accordingly determined to start without further delay for the seat of war.

For some time past His Majesty had been thinking a good deal about the Mallet episode, which had occurred during his absence, and spoke of the danger of leaving his government without a chief, and before starting he appointed as regent the Empress Marie Louise. She took the solemn oath at the Elysée in the presence of the princes, the ministers and other dignitaries. The Duke de Cadore was nominated secretary of the Regency to act in concert with the Lord High Chancellor as the Empress's adviser, and the command of the Guards was entrusted to General Caffarelli.

The Emperor left Saint-Cloud on the 15th of April at 4 a.m. Next day, at midnight, he was at Mayence. On his arrival he learned that Erfurt and the whole of Westphalia were in a great state of alarm. Nothing can describe the rapidity with which he advanced on getting such news. In eight hours he was at Erfurt. His Majesty did not stop

long in this town. From information received he felt now perfectly easy as to the result of the campaign. On leaving Erfurt, the Emperor wished to pass through Weimar in order to call upon the Grand Duchess, and he paid her a visit on the same day and at the same time that the Emperor Alexander went from Dresden to Toeplitz to see the other Duchess of Weimar, the hereditary Princess, his sister.

So gracious was his reception that the Emperor was charmed. Their interview lasted nearly half an hour. On leaving her, His Majesty said to the Prince of Neufchâtel, "This woman is always amazing; she has really got the brains of a great man!" The Duke accompanied the Emperor as far as Eckhardtsberg, where the Emperor invited him to dine.

The Emperor was living in the market-place there. He had only two rooms; his suite were encamped on the landing and staircase. Nothing was more extraordinary than to see this little town thus transformed in a few hours into headquarters. In the quadrangle, hemmed in by camps, bivouacs and artillery, amid thousands of waggons and vehicles crowded anyhow into the least possible space, the regiments were seen marching leisurely past, with

artillery waggons, ammunition vans, &c. These were followed by flocks of cattle and the little canteen carts, so light and rickety that the least shock damaged them. Then came marauders bringing forage, and peasants driving the carts and swearing loudly, much to the pillagers' merriment; couriers, orderlies and aides-de-camp galloped along past all this motley throng. If to all this be added the neighing of horses, the lowing of oxen, the rumbling of wheels, the shouts of soldiers, blare of trumpets, shrieks of fifes and rattle of drums, while the four hundred townsfolk all ask the soldiers the self-same questions in two or three different languages—how, we may wonder, could His Majesty possibly manage to be just as calm and composed in the midst of all this infernal row as if he were at home in his study at the Tuileries or Saint-Cloud?

And yet he was so. Seated there, at a dirty old table, with a map before him and a pen and compasses in his hand, wholly wrapped in thought, never showing the slightest impatience; indeed it seemed as if none of the noise ever reached his ears. But if any cry of pain were uttered, in a moment the Emperor raised his head and asked what was the matter. This power of isolating

himself so completely from his surroundings was possessed by His Majesty in a marvellous degree.

On the 1st of May the Emperor was at Lützen. The battle was not fought until the following day. That evening, about six o'clock, brave Marshal Bessières, Duke of Istria, was killed by a shell, just as, taking his stand on an eminence, wrapped in a long cloak to prevent being noticed, he had given orders for the burial of a brigadier who had fallen just in front of him.

Ever since the first campaigns in Italy the Duke of Istria had hardly ever left the Emperor. He had always shown dauntless courage and a frank honesty, qualities which among those surrounding His Majesty were passing rare. He had had vast experience as a soldier, and his kind heart and unswerving devotion to the Emperor endeared him greatly to the latter.

Napoleon was greatly affected on hearing the news of the Marshal's death. He remained speechless for a while, with lowered head and eyes fixed on the ground.

"Well," said he at last, "anyway he died as Turenne died, and his lot is to be envied." Then he passed his hand hurriedly across his eyes and quickly went out.

The Marshal's body was embalmed and removed to Paris. The Emperor wrote the following letter to the Duchess of Istria:

"MY COUSIN, — Your husband has met his death on the field of glory. Your loss, as that of your children, is doubtless a great one, but mine is greater yet. The Duke of Istria died the most glorious of deaths and suffered nothing at all. He has left a spotless reputation—the finest heritage that he could bequeath to his children. They have my protection, and they will also inherit the love that I bore their father. In all these considerations find motives of comfort that shall assuage your grief, and never doubt my regard for you and yours. I pray God to have you in His holy keeping.

NAPOLEON."

The King of Saxony erected a monument to the Duke of Istria on the very spot where he fell.

The long disputed victory of Lützen was among the Emperor's most glorious triumphs. It was mainly the young recruits who won this for him. They fought like lions. Marshal Ney, indeed, expected as much, for before the battle he said to the Emperor, "Sire, give me a lot of young fellows

like those. I'll lead them just wherever I like. The old soldiers know as much as we do, and they reflect and coolly look before they leap; but these plucky lads don't know the meaning of the word danger; they look straight ahead, never to right or to left."

This was actually the case, for the Prussians, led by the King in person, attacked the Marshal's forces with such fury that they turned their flank; but the recruits did not run away, but rallied closer to each other, shouting "Vive l'Empereur!" at the top of their voices. The Emperor suddenly appeared, and, electrified by his presence, they charged in their turn with incomparable valour. His Majesty was amazed. "I've commanded French troops for twenty years," said he, "but I have never seen such bravery and devotion."

It was indeed a sight to see these poor young fellows, some who had lost an arm or a leg, with just a breath or two of life in them, try to raise themselves up as the Emperor approached, and shout with all the voice left to them, "Vive l'Empereur!" Tears fill my eyes as I think of all these bright, brave, beautiful young men.

The same bravery, the same enthusiasm was displayed by our enemies. The chasseurs of the

Prussian Guard were almost all of them lads who were under fire for the first time. They hurled themselves precipitately into the jaws of destruction, falling by hundreds, while never yielding an inch.

In no battle, I think, did the Emperor seem so protected by destiny as this one. Bullets whizzed past him, and carried away bits of his horse's harness; shells and grenades burst at his very feet: yet he remained unscathed. The men, as they saw how he seemed to have a charmed life, only waxed more enthusiastic.

At the beginning of the battle the Emperor saw a battalion advancing whose chief had been suspended two or three days previously for some slight misdemeanour. The poor officer was marching in the rear ranks of his men, who adored him. The Emperor noticed him, bade the battalion halt, took the officer by the hand, and placed him once more at the head of his men. The effect of this was simply indescribable.

On the 8th of May, at seven p.m., the Emperor entered Dresden and took possession of the palace, which the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia had vacated that very morning. At some distance from the gates the Emperor was met by a municipal deputation.

"You deserve to be treated as I treat a conquered country," cried he. "I know all that you have done while the allies occupied your city; I have heard about the volunteers whom you equipped and armed against me with a generosity that was surprising even to the enemy itself; I know what insults you have heaped upon France, and what slanderous pamphlets you will now be forced to hide or destroy. Nor am I ignorant of the transports of joy which burst from you as the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia entered your walls. Your houses are still gay with garlands, and on the pavement the flowers yet lie which your maidens strewed beneath their feet. Yet I will pardon everything. Bless your King for this; it is to him you owe your safety, and it is only for love of him that I forgive you. General Durosnel, my aide-de-camp, is to be your governor. Your good King himself could wish for no one better."

Just as he was entering the city, the Emperor heard that part of the Russian rear sought to establish itself in the newer district of the town which was separated by the Elbe from the old part. His Majesty at once gave orders for them to be driven out, and for a whole day the river-banks resounded with cannonades and fusillades.

Bombs and shells fell like hailstones about the Emperor's quarters. A grenade split open one of the powder-magazines, but luckily this did not ignite. A second bomb fell shortly afterwards between the Emperor and several Italians. The latter jumped back to avoid the effects of an explosion. The Emperor, noticing their fright, began to laugh, and cried out to them, "Never mind, you blockheads; it won't hurt you!"

On the morning of the 11th of May the Russians fled, and the French troops entered all parts of the town. The Emperor remained all day on the bridge, watching the various regiments file past. Next day, at ten o'clock, the Imperial Guard went into action on the Pirna road. The Emperor sent General Flahaut on ahead, and the King of Saxony arrived about mid-day. As they met, the two monarchs dismounted and embraced, afterwards entering Dresden amid general acclamation.

General Flahaut, who preceded the King of Saxony with a detachment of the Imperial Guard, received most flattering and grateful thanks from this worthy monarch. It was impossible to be more friendly and kind than was the King of Saxony. The Emperor used to say that he and his family belonged to a race of patriarchs, and His

Majesty always had great affection for him. As long as the war lasted, he sent couriers daily to keep the King informed of every little event; he himself went to see him as often as he could, and, in short, displayed that amiability towards him which he knew so well how to assume with irresistible effect when he liked.

Some days after his arrival in Dresden the Emperor had a long conversation with the King of Saxony about the Emperor Alexander. The virtues and defects of this Prince were analysed at length, and the result showed that the Emperor Alexander had acted sincerely at the Erfurt conference, and that it must have been intrigues of a very complicated nature that could have brought him thus to break all the ties of friendship. "Sovereigns are so unhappy," exclaimed His Majesty; "always circumvented, always surrounded by flatterers or perfidious councillors, their first care being to keep the truth from getting to the ears of their master, for whom it is so important that he should know the truth."

Then the two monarchs spoke of the Emperor of Austria. His Majesty seemed deeply grieved that his union with the Archduchess Marie Louise had failed to win for him her father's confidence and friendship, as he hoped. "I was not born a king,"

said the Emperor; "perhaps that is the reason. And yet I should have thought that this condition would give me a greater claim to the friendship of Francis. I can never persuade myself, I feel, that such ties are not strong enough to keep the Emperor of Austria as my ally. For, after all, I am his son-in-law; my son is his grandson; he is fond of his daughter; she is happy. . . . How can he possibly be my enemy?"

On hearing of the victory of Lützen and the entry of Napoleon into Dresden, the Emperor of Austria hastened to send M. de Budna to his son-in-law. He arrived on the evening of the 16th, and his interview with the Emperor lasted until two o'clock in the morning. That made us hope that peace was going to be signed, and we planned a thousand things accordingly, but two or three days passed and we saw nothing but preparations for war, which sadly quenched our hopes. It was then that I heard the unfortunate Marshal Duroc exclaim, "This has lasted too long! We shall all of us perish." He foresaw his own death.

During the whole of this campaign the Emperor never had a moment's rest. Days were spent in riding and fighting, he always being in the saddle, and his nights were devoted to work. I never

could imagine how it was that he managed to bear such perpetual fatigue and almost always enjoyed the best of health. On the eve of the battle of Bautzen he went to bed at a very late hour, after having inspected all the outposts. When orders had been issued he lay down and slept soundly. On May 20th, early on the morning of the battle, the evolutions began, and at headquarters we most anxiously awaited the result of the fight, but it did not end that day. After a series of severe engagements, which all resulted in our favour, the Emperor at nine o'clock that evening returned to headquarters, took some light refreshment, and stayed with Prince Berthier until midnight. The rest of the night was spent in work, and next morning at five o'clock the Emperor was up and ready to renew hostilities.

Three or four hours after his arrival on the battlefield the Emperor could not resist the drowsiness which overcame him. Foreseeing the issue of the battle, he had a nap on the heights overlooking a ravine, in the very centre of the Duke de Ragusa's batteries. They roused him to say that the battle had been won.

When this fact was reported to me, I was not at all surprised, for I had noticed that when he was

forced to yield to sleep, the Emperor, like a true soldier, took such needful repose when and where he could.

Though the battle was won, fighting still went on until five o'clock p.m. At six o'clock the Emperor had his tent pitched near a lonely inn, which but a few days previously had served as the Czar's headquarters. I was ordered to come thither, and I hastened to obey the summons. His Majesty, however, was up all that night working with his secretaries and receiving and complimenting his valiant generals.

All the wounded who could walk were now on their way to Dresden, where they could receive every care and attention, but on the battlefield there yet lay ten thousand more, French, Russians and Prussians, half-alive, mutilated and in fearful suffering. The unflagging efforts of good Dr. Larrey and his medical staff hardly sufficed to give them all help and relief. And in this desolate country, where every village and hamlet had been sacked and burnt, what possible means of transport could be found? There were no carts, no horses. Should these poor fellows be left to perish in awful agony because there was no way of bringing them back to Dresden?

It was then that the Saxon peasantry, em-

bittered by all the horrors of war, who saw their homesteads burnt and lands laid waste, showed the whole army so touching an example of humane conduct. They saw how deeply grieved M. Larrey and his comrades were at the fate of the poor wounded; and in a trice, men, women and children hastened to bring their wheelbarrows and remove the sufferers to Dresden, showing to each and all the utmost tenderness. I have never seen anything more touching.

Baron Larrey and the Emperor had a somewhat sharp dispute. Among the wounded many young soldiers had been found with two fingers of the right hand mutilated. His Majesty was of opinion that these poor lads had done this on purpose, in order to be exempt from serving in the army; and he told M. Larrey so, who loudly protested that such a thing was impossible, and that cowardice of that sort was incompatible with the character of these brave recruits. As the Emperor persisted in his opinion, M. Larrey went so far as to accuse him of injustice. Things were at this pitch when positive proof was obtained that such uniform mutilation was due to the haste with which the young fellows loaded and fired their rifles, which they as yet could not properly handle. Then His Majesty saw

that M. Larrey was right, and praised him for his firmness in upholding what he knew was true. "You're a thorough good fellow," said Napoleon; "I should like to have only men like you about me; but men like you are very rare."

CHAPTER VII

Death of Marshal Duroc—Grief of the Emperor—Details of this sad event—The Emperor's impatience—His hairbreadth escapes—Death of General Kirgener—The Marshal still breathing—The Emperor's distress—The Russians utterly routed—The Marshal's dying sigh—His epitaph—We enter Silesia—The Emperor's cool-headedness—March on Breslau—The Emperor in a pillaged farm—Four waggons destroyed by fire—We enter Breslau—Armistice of the 4th of June—Our stay at Görlitz—Return to Dresden—Rumours quelled by the Emperor's presence—The Marcolini Palace—The Emperor lives as he did at Schönbrunn—The Comédie Française summoned to Dresden—Formation of the company—The Emperor's pastimes—Mademoiselle Georges—Talma and Mars lunch with His Majesty—Festivities in Dresden—Encampments outside the town—The Emperor's fête-day—The troops at the "Te Deum."

THE day after this dispute of the Emperor with Dr. Larrey, His Majesty suffered the irreparable loss of excellent Marshal Duroc. The Emperor was utterly overcome by the news; nor was there one of us all who forbore to shed a heartfelt tear at the death of him who was so just and so kind, albeit towards all the servants under him he ever showed himself a grave and strict disciplinarian. It was not

merely a loss for the Emperor, who had in him a true friend, but it was one, so to speak, for all France, who passionately adored him, and on whom he lavished counsel which was not always heeded. The death of Marshal Duroc was one of those events so grievous, so unexpected, that for a while one could scarcely believe it.

It happened as follows. The Emperor was pursuing the Russian rearguard, which repeatedly dodged him. For the tenth time it had escaped him, after having killed and captured a good many of our brave fellows, when two or three shells burst close to the Emperor's feet and drew from him the exclamation, "What! after such butchery as this, are there no prisoners? Those fellows won't leave me a scrap of anything." He had hardly spoken when a shell knocked down one of the chasseurs forming the escort, and he was flung almost under the horse on which His Majesty sat. Turning to the Grand Marshal he said, "Ah, Duroc, fortune is angry with us to-day."

"Sire," cried an aide-de-camp, galloping up, "General Bruyères has just been killed."

"My poor comrade since the Italian days! Is it possible? We must go through with it, though." Then, noticing an eminence to the left where he

could better watch the progress of events, the Emperor rode thither through a cloud of dust and smoke. He was closely followed by the Duke of Vicenza, the Duke of Treviso, Marshal Duroc, and General Kirgener, of the engineers. But the smoke was so dense that one could hardly see. All at once a tree close to the Emperor was struck and partially destroyed by a shell. His Majesty, on reaching the plateau, turned round to ask for his glasses, and only saw the Duke of Vicenza. Duke Charles de Plaisance rode up, pale as death, and whispered something to the chief equerry.

"What is it?" cried the Emperor, sharply. "What has happened?"

"Sire," said the Duke de Plaisance, weeping, "the Grand Marshal is dead."

"The Grand Marshal dead? Duroc, do you mean? You must be wrong; why he was close to me just now!"

Several aides-de-camp now arrived, with a page bringing His Majesty's glasses. The dreadful news was, in part at least, confirmed. The Duke of Friuli was alive, but had been wounded in the abdomen, and all surgical art was powerless to save him. The shell, after felling a tree and killing General Kirgener, had struck poor Marshal Duroc. Dr. Yvan and Dr.

Larrey were in attendance upon the patient, who had been moved to a house in Makersdorf; but there was no hope.

To describe the army's consternation and the Emperor's grief would be impossible. Mechanically His Majesty gave sundry orders and returned to camp, where he sat down on a stool outside his tent, his head bowed and his hands clasped. He remained thus for nearly an hour, without uttering a single word. Yet urgent measures had to be decided upon for the morrow. General Drouot approached and, in a voice broken by sobs, asked what should be done. "Everything to-morrow," replied the Emperor. Not another word escaped him. "Poor fellow!" muttered some of the old guardsmen, "he's lost one of his children!"

At nightfall the enemy were in full retreat, and the army having taken up its positions the Emperor went out of camp, and, accompanied by the Prince de Neufchâtel, Dr. Yvan, and the Duke of Vicenza, he went to the house where the wounded Marshal was lying. The scene was most harrowing. The Emperor, in despair, repeatedly embraced his dying friend, endeavouring to bid him hope, but the Duke, who well knew in what condition he was, only replied by asking for some opium. At this request

the Emperor went out; it was more than he could bear.

The Duke of Friuli died next morning. The Emperor ordered his body to be removed to Paris, to be placed at the Invalides. He bought the house in which the Grand Marshal had died, and enjoined the village pastor to place a stone over the bed bearing the inscription:

"Here General Duroc, Duke of Friuli, Grand Marshal of the Palace of the Emperor Napoleon, being struck down by a shell, died in the arms of the Emperor, his friend."

The preservation of this memorial tablet was made obligatory to the landlord of the house in question. It was on this condition alone that the Emperor consented to purchase it. To this end, the pastor, village magistrate, and landlord were all brought before His Majesty, who told them of his intentions, which they solemnly promised to fulfil. He thereupon paid over to them the sum agreed upon from his private purse.

It may be well just to let the reader know how this contract, so solemnly made, was carried out. The following order, issued from Russian head-quarters, will best tell him:

"A protocol dated March 16th (28th) states that the Emperor Napoleon paid Pastor Hermann of Makersdorf the sum of two hundred napoleons in gold for the erection of a monument in memory of Marshal Duroc, who died on the battlefield. His Excellency Prince Repnin, Governor-General of Saxony, having given orders to one of my clerks to go to Makersdorf and get the said sum, which is to be deposited with me until further orders, M. Meyerheim has been entrusted with such mission. Consequently he will at once leave for Makersdorf and seize the said sum. M. Meyerheim is responsible to me only for the execution of this order.

"(Signed) BARON DE ROSEN.

"*Dresden, 20th of March* (1st *of April*), 1814."

Comment is needless.

After the battles of Bautzen and Wartchen the Emperor entered Silesia. He saw the allied armies fleeing in every direction before his own, and the sight was vastly flattering to his self-esteem, as he imagined that he would soon be the master of a rich and fertile country whose rich resources would help him in his scheme of conquest. One often heard him ask, "Are we far from such and such town? When shall we reach Breslau?" His

impatience, however, did not prevent him from noticing everything *en route*, as a mere tourist might have done. He carefully scrutinised the houses one by one when going through a village; he noted the different rivers and mountains, collecting the slightest information which anybody was able or willing to give him.

On the 27th of May His Majesty, being only three days' march from Breslau, encountered, outside the little town of Michelsdorf, several regiments of Russian cavalry, who barred his passage. They were quite close to us before His Majesty even thought of looking at them. The Prince de Neufchâtel, seeing how near the enemy was, ran to the Emperor and cried, "Sire, they are still advancing." "Well, we are advancing, too!" was the smiling rejoinder; "can't you see behind us, there?" and he pointed to the French infantry approaching four deep. Our firing soon managed to dislodge the Russians from their position, but a league or so farther on we fell in with them again, and there was more skirmishing. The Emperor was well aware of this, and he manœuvred with the utmost precision. Himself leading the troops who pushed on ahead, he went from height to height, circumventing every village and town to satisfy himself as to their

positions and resources. By his care, by his wonderful powers of observation, the scene changed ten times a day. One column debouched by a deep cutting, another by a wood, a third by a village. Each could instantly regain higher ground, for the defence of which a battery of artillery was always in readiness. The Emperor decided all such manœuvres with admirable tact, so that it was impossible to be taken by surprise. All his orders were short, precise, and so clear that no explanation whatever was needed.

On May 29th, not knowing how far it would be prudent to advance along the Breslau road, the Emperor stopped at a little farm called Rosnig. It had already been sacked, and it presented an utterly wretched appearance. Only a little room with study adjoining could be found for the Emperor. The Prince de Neufchâtel and suite had to lodge as best they might in huts, barns and even in the gardens, for there was not shelter for everyone.

Next day an adjacent farm caught fire, when six of our baggage-waggons were burnt. One of them contained the bursar's treasury; another had all the Emperor's clothes and linen in it, as well as jewels, rings, snuff-boxes and other precious articles. But little could be saved, and if the

second supply of clothing had not speedily arrived, the Emperor would have been without shirts or stockings. Major Odenleben, who has written a most interesting account of this campaign, states that everything belonging to His Majesty was burnt, and that some breeches had to be made in a great hurry at Breslau. This is erroneous. I do not believe the clothes-stores were burnt at all, but even if this had happened, the Emperor would not on that account have been short of clothes, as there were four or five different supplies of these, either in advance of headquarters or in the rear. In Russia, where orders were given to burn all the carriages which had no horses attached, these orders were strictly carried out to the detriment of the household servants, who were left almost destitute, but for His Majesty everything considered indispensable was retained.

At last, on June 1st, at six in the morning, the French vanguard entered Breslau, with Generals Lauriston and Hogendorp at their head, the latter having been appointed governor of this city, the capital of Silesia. Thus in part the promise made by the Emperor on leaving Russia by way of Warsaw was fulfilled: "I am going to fetch three hundred thousand men. Success will make the Russians bold.

I shall fight two battles between the Elbe and the Oder, and in six months I shall be back at the Niemen again."

These two battles, fought and won by recruits unaided by cavalry, restored the prestige of the French army. The King of Saxony had been brought back in triumph to his capital. The Emperor's headquarters were at Breslau; one of the corps of the Grand Army was at Berlin, and the enemy had been driven out of Hamburg; Russia was being forced back to her frontiers. It was at this juncture that the Emperor of Austria, intervening in the affairs of the two allied Sovereigns, advised them to propose an armistice. This advice they followed, and the Emperor was weak enough to yield to their demands. The armistice was granted and signed on the 4th of June, and His Majesty was preparing to return to Dresden. An hour after his departure he remarked, "If the allies do not honestly desire peace, this armistice may prove most fatal to ourselves."

On the 8th of June His Majesty slept at Görlitz. Fire broke out that night in a part of the town where the Guards were billeted. At one o'clock a.m. one of the notables of the town came to inform the Emperor of the disaster. I was dressing him at the moment, for it was his intention to start at daybreak.

"What is the amount of the damage?" he asked.

"Sire, seven or eight thousand francs, at least."

"Well, then, pay them ten thousand, and do so immediately."

The townsfolk instantly saw how generous the Emperor was, and as he left Görlitz an hour or two afterwards he was greeted by unanimous shouts of gratitude.

We got back to Dresden on the morning of the 10th. The Emperor's arrival dispelled the strange rumours afloat since the remains of Marshal Duroc had passed through the city. The coffin really contained the Emperor's body, so they said. He had been killed in the last battle, and his corpse had been mysteriously shut up in a room of the castle, where candles burnt beside it all night long. When he arrived these persons obstinately declared that it was not the Emperor which they saw in his carriage, but a big doll with a waxen face. Next day, though, when he appeared on horseback before everyone, they were compelled to believe that he was really alive!

The Emperor took up his quarters at the Marcolini Palace, a charming residence situate in the suburb of Friedrichstadt. An immense garden, beautiful meadows on the banks of the Elbe, with

an incomparable view, made the stay a far more attractive one than that of the Winter Palace, and the Emperor was deeply grateful to the King of Saxony for having prepared this place for him. Here his life resembled that which he led at Schönbrunn: reviews every morning, a good deal of work during the day, and a little amusement in the evening. Simplicity, rather than splendour, was the general rule. The best part of the day was given up to affairs of State, and then such tranquillity reigned throughout the palace that, had it not been for the two mounted sentries which showed that royalty was staying there, the house might easily have been taken for the modest home of some private person. The Emperor chose to reside in the right wing of the palace, the left being occupied by the Prince de Neufchâtel. In the centre of the building there was a large saloon and two smaller rooms, which were used for receptions.

Two days after his return, His Majesty gave orders for the principal actors of the Comédie Française to visit Dresden during the time of the armistice. The Duke of Vicenza, who for the time being acted as Grand Marshal of the palace, had instructions to prepare everything for their reception. In this he was assisted by M. de Beausset and M. de Turenne, whom the Emperor had appointed

managers. A theatre was accordingly improvised in the orangery of the Marcolini Palace, which communicated with the Emperor's apartments, and was calculated to hold about two hundred persons. It was built as if by enchantment, and, until the French company arrived, inaugural performances were given by the Italian comedians of the King of Saxony. The Paris actors who appeared in tragedy were M. Saint-Prix, M. Talma, and Mademoiselle Georges; those who acted in comedy being MM. Fleury, Saint-Fal, Baptiste junior, Armand, Thénard, Michot, Devigny, Michelot and Barbier, Mesdames Mars, Bourgoin, Thénard, Emilie Contat and Mézeray. M. Desprès was stage manager.

All the actors arrived on the 19th of June, and found that every arrangement for their convenience had been made: tastefully-furnished lodgings, carriages, servants, everything, in short, to make them bear the tedium of living in a foreign country, and to show them at the same time what regard His Majesty had for their talents.

The company made its first appearance at the Orangery Theatre on the 22nd of June in the *Gageure Imprévue*, and another piece, then very popular in Paris, entitled *La Suite d'un Bal Masqué*. As the stage of the impromptu playhouse was too small

for the performance of tragedies, these were given in the large Dresden theatre, admission being only by private tickets, given gratis by the Count de Turenne. At all such performances the attendants were chosen from His Majesty's personal suite, who handed round refreshments during the evening. After the arrival of the Comédie Française, this was pretty much how a day was spent.

Everything was quiet till eight o'clock, unless some courier happened to arrive, or an aide-de-camp was suddenly summoned. At eight o'clock I dressed the Emperor. At nine there was a levée, attended by all who bore the rank of colonel. The local military and civil authorities were also admitted; the Dukes of Weimar and Anhalt; the brothers and nephews of the King of Saxony sometimes came as well. Then there was lunch, and afterwards parade on the Osterwise meadows, close to the palace. The Emperor always rode thither, dismounting on arrival. The troops filed past and saluted thrice with their customary enthusiasm. The manœuvres were directed sometimes by the Emperor and sometimes by the Count de Lobau. As soon as the cavalry began to defile, His Majesty returned to the palace and resumed his work. Then the period of quiet ensued to which I have alluded. Dinner was

not till a late hour, seven or eight p.m. The Emperor often dined alone with the Prince de Neufchâtel, unless he had guests in the person of members of the Royal House of Saxony. After dinner he went to the play, and after the performance His Majesty returned to his study, working there either by himself or with his secretaries. Every day it was the same thing, unless, as rarely happened, being tired out with the day's work, His Majesty took it into his head to invite Mademoiselle Georges to pay him a visit after the play. She used to remain in his apartments for two or three hours, but never longer.

The Emperor also used occasionally to invite Talma or Mademoiselle Mars to luncheon. One day, in the course of a conversation with this charming actress, His Majesty alluded to her *début*. "Sire," said she, with her well-known grace, "I began when quite small. I stepped in without being noticed."

"Without being noticed!" cried the Emperor. "You are mistaken there. Believe me, mademoiselle, that I and all France have ever applauded your rare talents."

The Emperor's stay in Dresden brought wealth and riches in abundance to the town. Over six millions of visitors came thither between the 8th of

May and the 16th of November, according to local statistics. This influx served to shower gold upon lodging-house proprietors, restaurant keepers, and the like. Those folk who undertook to billet the troops made handsome profits as well. At Dresden one saw Paris tailors and bootmakers, who taught the natives to ply their trade in the French style. There were even bootblacks on the Elbe bridge, like those on the Seine, who shouted, "Clean your boots, sir?"

All about the town several camps for the wounded and convalescent had been established. The Westphalian camp presented a charming appearance, being a succession of pretty little gardens, with a fortress of green turf, its bastions being surmounted by hortensias. Here a piece of ground had been converted into a terrace, with paths and flower-beds, like some carefully-tended garden. On a mound there was a statue of Pallas Athene; and the barracks themselves were covered with moss, and decorated with greenery and garlands, which were replaced every day.

As the armistice ended on the 15th of August, His Majesty's fête-day was celebrated five days earlier. The town and the Court had made splendid preparations, so that the Emperor might have a

worthy reception. All the wealthiest and most influential families in Dresden sought to distinguish themselves by giving sumptuous balls, concerts, and parties of all sorts in His Majesty's honour. That morning, before the review, the King of Saxony and his whole family paid the Emperor a congratulatory visit. After lunch, His Majesty reviewed fifteen thousand of the Guards, all equipped in as spick-and-span fashion as if they were at one of the smartest parades in the Champ-de-Mars.

After the review the French and Saxon troops went to church, where a *Te Deum* was sung. At the close of the religious ceremony the brave fellows all sat down to a banquet, and with music, dancing and merriment their enjoyment lasted until a late hour.

CHAPTER VIII

A desire for peace—Our honour satisfied—Difficulties raised by the Czar — Austria mediates — Departure from Dresden — Splendid appearance of our troops — England and the coalition—The Lunéville conditions—Civil war in Prussia —The Duke of Otranto—Fouché made Governor-General of Illyria—Devotion of the Duke of Rovigo—Arrival of the King of Naples — The fortification of Dresden — We travel to Mayence—Death of the Duke of Abrantes—The Emperor's grief—Brief interview with the Empress—The Emperor three whole days in his study—Expiration of the armistice—Performance by the Comédie Française—Party at General Durosnel's—Lord Bristol—The French infantry and cavalry and their several divisions—The enemy's forces —Two to one—Austria proves perfidious—Declaration of war—Count Louis de Narbonne.

ALL the while the armistice lasted, negotiations for peace had been in progress. The Emperor was most anxious for this, since by the battles of Lützen and Bautzen, the honour of the French army had been amply satisfied. Unfortunately he desired that peace should be subject to certain conditions, and to these his adversaries were loth to consent. Thus we soon were to witness a further series of disasters, which made peace more and more impossible.

Directly peace negotiations were opened, the Czar, in spite of three battles won by Napoleon, declined to entertain proposals made direct to him by France herself, but would only consent to do so if Austria acted as mediator. Such arrogance was little likely to bring about a peaceable understanding, and, as conqueror, Napoleon naturally felt irritated thereby. But in grave junctures he well knew how to curb just susceptibilities of this sort, which such conduct on the part of the Czar was well calculated to arouse. However, much time was wasted in Dresden, as previously it had been wasted during our long delay in Moscow; time that for ourselves was loss, while for the enemy it was gain.

As then all hope of an amicable arrangement had vanished, the Emperor left Dresden on August 15th, when hostilities were resumed. The French army was still of magnificently impressive proportions, comprising two hundred thousand infantry, but only forty thousand cavalry, for it had been impossible to repair our heavy losses in horses. As ill-luck would have it, England was at the bottom of the alliance of Russia, Prussia and Sweden against France. Her subsidies entitled her to certain rights, and no one would act without consulting her first, and I since learned that, while

such sham negotiations were in progress, the British Government declared to the Czar that under the actual circumstances the Lunéville conditions were also too favourable to France. All these objections could be briefly summed up in the words "We want war." And war is what they got, or rather this scourge continued to devastate Germany, while France herself was ere long threatened with invasion. I ought also to observe that what helped to make our position extremely critical in case of a reverse was the fact that Prussia had called out the *Landwehr* and the *Landsturm*, which doubled our danger. In addition to this we had the fear, afterwards realised, that Austria, tame, listless mediator that she was, would become our implacable foe.

Before proceeding further, it seems fitting that I should touch upon one or two matters which unwittingly have been omitted, and which refer to our stay at Dresden before what we may call the second campaign of 1813. First let me mention the appearance in Dresden of the Duke of Otranto, whom His Majesty had summoned thither. He was but rarely seen at the Tuileries since the Duke of Rovigo had replaced him at the Ministry of Police, and I remember that his appearance at headquarters surprised not a few, for he was believed to be in utter disgrace.

Those who were wishful to explain the cause of every little event, thought that it was His Majesty's intention to contrast the wily measures of the Fouché police with Baron Stein's all-powerful system, he (the avowed head of all the numerous secret societies) being reasonably enough regarded as the leader of popular opinion in Prussia and Germany, where students were only awaiting the propitious moment for them to be up in arms. Such conjectures, however, were wholly unwarrantable. The Emperor, in sending for M. Fouché, had a real motive which he managed to disguise by an apparent pretext. Being ever mindful of the Mallet conspiracy, the Emperor deemed it imprudent to leave so powerful a malcontent in Paris as the Duke of Otranto, and I often heard him say as much. Yet to hide this, his real motive, the Emperor appointed M. Fouché to the governorship of the Illyrian provinces, in place of Count Bertrand, who later succeeded Marshal Duroc as Grand Marshal of the Palace. Whatever can be said of M. Fouché, it is quite certain that few persons had such a high opinion of his talents as a police official as the Emperor himself. Often when anything unusual occurred in Paris, notably when news of the Mallet conspiracy reached him, the Emperor, touching at night-time upon all the events of that

day, concluded by saying, "That would never have happened if Fouché had been Minister of Police." This may have been prejudice on his part, for certainly the Emperor never had a more faithful and devoted servant than the Duke of Rovigo, though in Paris folk made great fun of his few hours' captivity.

As Prince Eugene had returned to Italy at the outset of the campaign to organise a fresh army there, we did not see him at Dresden. The King of Naples arrived there almost by himself on the night of the 13th of August, having left behind him his handful of Neapolitan troops. I was in the Emperor's room when the King of Naples entered. I cannot say why, but it seemed to me that the Emperor did not welcome his brother-in-law as cordially as in the old days. Prince Murat stated that he had not been able to remain any longer at Naples, knowing that the French army to which he belonged was fighting. His one desire was to join its ranks and go into action at once. He accompanied the Emperor to the parade ground and was given the command of the Imperial Guard. It would have been hard to find a more intrepid chief. Later on he became commander-in-chief of the cavalry division.

All the while the armistice lasted, while busied

with all the lengthy and abortive conferences of the Congress of Prague, it is impossible to imagine all the various work to which the Emperor devoted himself from morning till night, and oftentimes all night long. He was for ever poring over maps, rehearsing subsequent battles which he had planned. Growing often impatient at these over-lengthy negotiations, as to the issue of which it was impossible to be blind, the Emperor one evening told me (it was the end of July) to see if everything were in readiness for our projected excursion to Mayence. He had arranged to meet the Empress there, who was to arrive on the 25th, and the Emperor intended to join her shortly after that date.

I merely chronicle the fact of this journey, which in itself was devoid of incident, except I note that it was while travelling to Mayence that the Emperor received news of the death of the Duke of Abrantes, who had succumbed to a violent attack of the malady from which he had long suffered. Though aware that the Duke's mental state was deplorable in the extreme, and that such a catastrophe was only to be expected, the Emperor felt the shock greatly, and showed sincere sorrow for his former aide-de-camp.

The Emperor only remained a few days with

the Empress, whom he had been delighted to see once more. But great political interests recalled him to Dresden. In the course of his return journey he visited several places *en route*, and on the 4th of August we had got back to the Saxon capital. Travellers who had only seen the city in peace-time would have found difficulty in recognising it. Immense fortifications had transformed it into a garrison town, and several batteries had been erected in the environs which commanded the further bank of the Elbe. Everything had got a warlike look, and the Emperor was so busy with State affairs that for nearly three days running he scarcely once left his study. Yet in the midst of such warlike preparations everything shaped itself for the joyous observance of the Emperor's fête-day on August 10th. As in Paris, there was at Dresden a performance given, free of charge, at the theatre on the eve of the fête. The Théâtre Français company acted two comedies, the play beginning at 5 p.m. This was their farewell performance, as they were under orders to return to Paris immediately afterwards. Next day, the 10th, the King of Saxony and all the members of his Royal house visited the Marcolini Palace at 9 a.m. to present their respects to the Emperor. A grand levée was held afterwards, as

at the Tuileries; also a review, when the Emperor inspected a detachment of the Guard, and several of the other regiments. Some of the Saxon troops were invited by our men to dine with them. That day, without exaggeration, Dresden might have been compared to a vast dining-room, for, as a matter of fact, while His Majesty was dining in state with the King of Saxony and his Royal kinsmen, all the diplomatic body was being entertained by the Duke of Bassano; Baron Bignon, the French envoy at Warsaw, had invited all the Poles of distinction in Dresden to accept his hospitality; Count Daru gave a grand dinner to the French authorities; General Friant entertained the French and Saxon generals; while the heads of the various colleges were the guests of Baron de Serra, the French minister at Dresden. Finally, this day of banquets was wound up by a supper to nearly two hundred people, given by General Henri Durosnel, Governor of Dresden, after a splendid ball at the French Legation.

Upon our return from Mayence to Dresden, I heard that General Durosnel's house was much frequented by members of the first society, both French and Saxon. During His Majesty's absence the General found leisure to give several entertainments, including one to the actors and actresses of

the Comédie Française. I remember, too, a funny story that was told at the time. Without the least breach of politeness or of good manners, Baptiste junior, so they said, contributed greatly to the general amusement on that evening by appearing as "Lord Bristol," an English diplomatist on his way to the Congress of Prague. His make-up was so perfect, his accent so natural, and his demeanour so impassive and phlegmatic, that several persons at the Court of Saxony were completely taken in. This did not astonish me, but only convinced me that Baptiste junior's talent for mystification had lost nothing of its charm since the time when he used to set the table in a roar at Colonel Beauharnais' breakfast-parties. How much had happened since those old days!

Seeing that nothing could delay the resumption of hostilities, the Emperor forthwith divided his 200,000 men into fourteen army corps, the respective command of these being given to Marshals Victor, Ney, Marmont, Augereau, Macdonald, Oudinot, Davoust, Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, Prince Poniatowski, and Generals Regnier, Rapp, Lauriston, Vandamme and Bertrand. The 40,000 cavalry formed six large divisions under the command of Generals Nansouty, Latour-Maubourg, Sebastiani, Arrighi, Milhaud and

Kellermann; and, as already stated, the King of Naples had the command of the Imperial Guard. In addition, for the first time our ranks were swelled by the Guards of Honour, a picked body of men chosen from families of wealth and high standing, and which numbered over ten thousand, divided into two regiments, one being commanded by General Count de Pully, and the other, if I mistake not, by General Ségur. These young fellows, till now used to an indolent life of pleasure, soon turned out most excellent cavalrymen; a corps that distinguished itself on several occasions, notably at the battle of Dresden, of which I shall presently speak.

The strength of the French army has already been stated. The combined forces of the allies amounted to 420,000 infantry and 100,000 cavalry, without counting a reserve army corps of 80,000 Russians ready to leave Poland under General Bennigsen. Thus the enemy outnumbered us by more than two to one.

Just as hostilities were being resumed, Austria declared herself our enemy. Though not unlooked for, this was a bitter blow to the Emperor, and he often expressed himself to this effect when conversing with others. M. de Metternich, so they say, almost hinted at the likelihood of this in one

of the final interviews which this minister had with the Emperor at Dresden, but His Majesty was long unwilling to believe that the Emperor of Austria would really side with the allies against his own daughter and grandson. All such doubts, however, were quashed by the arrival of Count Louis de Narbonne, who returned from Prague to Dresden the bearer of a declaration of war from Austria. Henceforth it was evident that France must soon count as her enemies all those countries which were no longer occupied by her troops. Such a forecast was amply justified. Yet, so far, things had not reached a desperate pitch, nor had we yet been obliged to assume the defensive.

CHAPTER IX

The Emperor strives for peace—The Bautzen battlefield—Murat at the head of the Imperial Guard—The Emperor at Görlitz—Interview with the Duke of Vicenza—The gage of peace—Blücher in Silesia—He violates the armistice—General Jomini and the Czar—First tidings of Moreau—General Jomini is presented to him—Mutual coldness—Two traitors—Murat's mission—The Emperor and General Gourgaud—Dresden menaced—General Haxo is sent to General Vandamme—The Emperor on the Dresden bridge—The town reassured by his presence—The Latour-Maubourg cuirassiers—Great battle—The Emperor in greater danger than ever—He is drenched through—My difficulty in undressing him—His only attack of fever—The day after the victory—His Majesty's brilliant escort—News from Paris—Trial of Michel and Reynier—The Empress leaves for Cherbourg—His Majesty's solicitude.

WAR broke out once more without an absolute rupture of negotiations, since the Duke of Vicenza was still in treaty with M. de Metternich, and moreover the Emperor, when on horseback, told his staff officers that he was marching forward to the conquest of peace. But what hope could there be of this after Austria's bellicose announcement, and when

the allies continually increased their pretentious claims each time that the Emperor endeavoured to satisfy these? It was at five o'clock in the afternoon that the Emperor left Dresden, advancing by way of Königstein. He spent the next day at Bautzen, where he reconnoitred the scene of his latest victory. Here the King of Naples, who declined to be treated as Royalty, rejoined him at the head of the Imperial Guard, which presented as imposing an appearance as ever.

On the 18th we reached Görlitz, where the Emperor met the Duke of Vicenza, who had returned from Bohemia. He confirmed the news that the Austrian Emperor had decided to side with Russia, Prussia and Sweden against the husband of his daughter, whom he had given to Napoleon as a gage of peace. It was also from the Duke of Vicenza that the Emperor heard how General Blücher had just entered Silesia at the head of 100,000 men, and that, without respecting the most sacred treaties, he had seized Breslau on the very day before the expiration of the armistice. News also came that General Jomini, a Swiss by birth, but now in the service of France, and head of Marshal Ney's staff, whom the Emperor had loaded with benefits, had just deserted his post for

the Czar's headquarters, where he had met with a most cordial welcome.

The Duke gave a detailed account of this desertion, which, seemingly, grieved His Majesty more than all other news. He said that when General Jomini was presented to the Czar, he found him surrounded by staff officers, among whom was General Moreau. This was the first intelligence which the Emperor had received of Moreau being in the enemy's camp. The Duke of Vicenza added that the Czar had introduced Jomini to Moreau, who bowed coldly, while Jomini merely nodded, and withdrew without uttering a word. All that evening he was glum and silent, remaining in a corner of the room, as far removed from Moreau as possible. Such coldness had not escaped the Czar's notice. Next morning he asked Jomini the cause of such behaviour, saying that he thought it would have been pleasant to him to meet General Moreau.

"So it would, anywhere else, Sire," replied Jomini.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, if I had been born a Frenchman, like the General, I should not be here to-day in Your Majesty's camp."

When the Duke of Vicenza had finished, the Emperor, smiling bitterly, observed, "I am certain that wretched Jomini thinks that he has done a fine thing! Oh, Caulaincourt! it is these turncoats that will ruin me!" Perhaps Moreau, who received Jomini so coldly, may have been thinking that if he were still in the French army he would not have betrayed his trust thus basely, nor is this so extraordinary as to see two traitors ashamed of one another, being mutually deceived as to their treason, and each pretending to be shocked at it.

However, the news brought by M. de Caulaincourt caused the Emperor to modify his tactics. He decided not to advance in person upon Berlin as he had thought of doing. Aware of the necessity of knowing exactly how to deal with the large Austrian army under Prince Schwartzenberg, His Majesty moved into Bohemia, but hearing from scouts and spies that eighty thousand Russians were in the opposite direction, as well as a considerable portion of the Austrian army, he retraced his steps after sundry engagements, which his presence always converted into victories.

By the 24th we were back at Bautzen. From this place Napoleon sent the King of Naples to Dresden to reassure the King of Saxony and the

inhabitants, who knew that the enemy was at the gates of the city. The Emperor assured them that the hostile forces should not enter, as he had purposely returned to defend the approaches, and he begged them not to yield to any panic, which possibly some sudden and solitary raid might provoke. Murat got there just in time, for, as we afterwards heard, consternation was general throughout the city. Yet, such was the popular faith in the Emperor's promises that everyone at his presence took heart.

While the King of Naples was fulfilling this mission, Colonel Gourgaud was called one morning into the Emperor's tent, where I happened to be at the time. "To-morrow I shall be on my way to Pirna," said His Majesty, "but I shall stop at Stolpen. Go you to Dresden just as fast as ever you can; you must get there to-night. On arriving you must see the King of Naples, Durosnel, the Duke de Bassano, and Marshal Gouvion. Reassure all of them. Go and see the Saxon minister, De Gersdorf, and tell him that you are unable to have an audience of the King as you are obliged to leave directly, but that I can send to-morrow 40,000 men to Dresden, and that I am getting ready to come thither with the whole army. At daybreak you must go to the commander of engineers, visit the

redoubts and outworks of the city, and after a thorough inspection, come back post-haste and rejoin me at Stolpen. Bring me an exact and faithful report of the state of affairs, as well as Marshal Saint-Cyr's opinion thereupon, and also that of the Duke de Bassano. Be off!"

The Colonel instantly started at full gallop, though that day he had as yet had nothing to eat.

At eleven o'clock the next night Colonel Gourgaud got back to the Emperor, having successfully carried out his instructions. The army of the allies, however, was drawn up on the plains outside Dresden, and sundry attacks had been made upon the outposts. As the Colonel informed us, on the arrival of the King of Naples, the townsfolk, in their abject terror, trusted entirely to the Emperor. In fact, hordes of Cossacks were visible from the suburbs, which they now threatened, and their appearance drove the inhabitants to retreat for safety's sake to the town.

"As I came away," said Colonel Gourgaud, "I saw a village in flames about half a league from the Grosser Garten, and Marshal Gouvion-Saint-Cyr was preparing to evacuate that position."

"Well, but what does the Duke de Bassano think?" exclaimed the Emperor, sharply.

"He thinks, Sire, that they won't be able to hold out for another twenty-four hours."

"And what's your opinion?"

"Mine, Sire? Why, that Dresden will be taken to-morrow if Your Majesty is not there."

"May I rely upon you that this is the case?"

"Sire, I'll answer for it with my head."

His Majesty then sent for General Haxo, and, pointing to the map, said, "Vandamme is advancing beyond the Elbe by way of Pirna; the enemy has been over-eager to push forward to Dresden; Vandamme will find himself in their rear. I had intended to support him with the whole army, but the fate of Dresden makes me uneasy, and I don't want to sacrifice the town. I could move thither in a few hours, and I shall do so, though it will cost me much to abandon a plan which, if well carried out, might furnish me with the means to have done with the allies at a single stroke. Happily Vandamme is sufficiently strong to supplement the general movement by partial attacks which will serve to harass the enemy. Tell him to move from Pirna towards Giesshübl and reach the Peterswald defiles, where, entrenched in this inexpugnable position, he is to await the result of our encounter before the walls of Dresden. It is for him that I reserve the

task of depriving the vanquished of their arms. But cool-headedness is required; and he must not concern himself with panic-stricken fugitives. Make General Vandamme thoroughly understand what I expect him to do. He will never have a finer opportunity to win a marshal's *bâton*."

General Haxo left immediately, and the Emperor then bade Colonel Gourgaud take a fresh horse and return at full speed to Dresden to herald His Majesty's approach.

"The Old Guard will precede me," said Napoleon; "I hope they won't be frightened when they see it."

On the morning of the 26th the Emperor rode on to the Elbe bridge, and, amid the exultant cries of the troops, commenced making his dispositions for the terrible battle which lasted three days.

It was at ten o'clock in the morning when the inhabitants of Dresden, reduced to despair and about to capitulate, saw the Emperor arrive. The scene suddenly changed, and to utter discouragement firm trust succeeded, especially when Latour-Maubourg's dashing cuirassiers filed across the bridge with heads held high and eyes fixed on the adjacent hills, surmounted by the enemy. The Emperor at once alighted at the palace of the King, who was

then about to find shelter elsewhere in the new part of the town. Napoleon's arrival made him change his plans. Their interview was a most affecting one.

I cannot presume to give exact details of all that occurred during these memorable days, in which the Emperor covered himself with glory, and was exposed to greater perils than ever before. Pages, equerries, and aides-de-camp fell dead close at his side; horses were repeatedly shot under him; yet he bore a charmed life, and came out of the fray unscathed. At the sight of this, the ardour of his men waxed greater, as did their trust and admiration. Suffice it to say, that on the first day the Emperor did not get back to headquarters until midnight, and spent all the subsequent hours until daybreak in dictating despatches while striding up and down. Then he got into the saddle again. The weather was atrocious; it rained in torrents all day long. By nightfall the enemy had been utterly routed. It was then that the Emperor thought of returning to the palace. He was then in a most deplorable state. He had been in the saddle since six that morning. It had rained incessantly, and he was drenched through. Even his top-boots were full of water, which must have dripped off his greatcoat. His hat was a battered, shapeless mass; in short, one might

have believed that he had been dragged out of the river. The King of Saxony, who awaited his coming, saw him in this state, and embraced him as if he were some beloved son who had just escaped grievous danger. There were tears in his eyes as he clasped to his breast the preserver of his capital. The Emperor then went to his room, while the water dripped from him and left a trail as he passed. I found it very difficult to undress him. Knowing that after a tiring day the Emperor liked a bath, I had had one prepared, but as he was unusually tired and shivered all over, His Majesty preferred to go straight to bed, and I warmed this for him at once. No sooner was he in bed than he sent for Baron Fain, one of his secretaries, to go through a mass of letters with him, and only when this work was over did he take a bath. He had not been in it more than a few minutes when he was seized with illness and vomiting, which obliged him to go back to bed. "My dear Constant," said His Majesty, "I am in absolute need of rest. See that I am not disturbed unless for something of the utmost importance. Tell Fain this." I obeyed the Emperor's orders, and then mounted guard in the room adjoining his bedroom, like some inexorable sentry, barring the passage of all those who sought to approach.

Next morning early the Emperor rang for me, and I hastened to his room, feeling anxious to know what sort of night he had had. I found him much better and in high spirits, but he told me he had felt a rather sharp touch of fever, the only time, so far as I know, that the Emperor ever had fever, for the whole time I was in his service I never saw him so ill as to be obliged to remain in bed for twenty-four hours. He rose at his usual time, and on going down was much pleased with the smart appearance of the battalion on duty. These brave grenadiers the evening before had returned to Dresden with him in a pitiable state; but now, on parade in the palace courtyard, they looked in splendid trim, with their arms as bright and clean as if at a grand review in Paris. All night long they had been cleaning up and drying their kit before huge fires. Instead of sleep they preferred to have the satisfaction of looking spick-and-span when the Emperor inspected them. A word of praise repaid them for all their fatigue; indeed, it may be said that no military leader was ever so beloved by his soldiers as was Napoleon.

The last Paris courier brought me several letters from home, as well as others from friends, which of course I dearly prized. They told me, I remember, about a famous trial then going on between the

banker Michel and Reynier. This scandalous affair had caused such a stir in Paris that folk were as greatly concerned about it as they were for the fortunes of the army. My correspondents also informed me of a journey which the Empress was about to make to Cherbourg to see the dykes burst and the sea-water fill the harbour. This journey had been suggested by the Emperor, who always took every opportunity of letting the Empress appear publicly and sustain the impression that she was Regent for the nonce. She convoked and presided at the Council of Ministers, and more than once, since Austria declared war, I have seen the Emperor congratulate himself that "his Louise" was devoted to France and the French, being merely Austrian by birth. He also allowed her, in his name, to publish all the official news concerning the army. Bulletins were sent home all ready for issue, and there is no doubt that Napoleon sought to win popularity for the Empress-Regent by making her the medium for communicating State matters to the public. Besides, though we who were on the spot heard at once if a battle were lost or won, we often only got our knowledge of the operations of the various army corps from the Paris newspapers. Our eagerness to read these may be imagined.

CHAPTER X

The King of Naples' bravery—The effect of his appearance—The Emperor eulogises him—The Emperor on the battlefield—The sick and wounded—Details recounted by a peasant—Prince Schwartzenberg believed to be dead—The Prince de Neufchâtel's dog — Inscription on its collar — Death of Moreau—His last moments—Resolve to march on Berlin—Departure from Dresden—Marshal Saint-Cyr—The Castle of Düben—The Emperor's scheme is proclaimed to the troops—The Generals dissent—The Emperor dejected and listless—Departure for Leipzig—The staff officers delighted—Marshal Augereau sides with Napoleon—Brief stay at Leipzig—Proclamations issued by the Crown Prince of Sweden—M. Moldrecht — Heavy firing — Our ammunition exhausted — Orders for retreat—The Emperor and Prince Poniatowski—The King of Saxony's indignation—His Majesty's peril—Final leave-taking of the two Sovereigns.

DURING the second day of the battle of Dresden the King of Naples, or rather Marshal Murat, displayed prodigious courage. This extraordinary prince has been much talked of, yet those only who have met him personally can form an idea of what he really was, nor is their knowledge complete unless they actually saw him on a battlefield. His appearance there was like the appearance of some great

actor on the stage, who before the footlights sways multitudes, yet who in private life seems to have little or nothing about him of the hero. When in Paris I witnessed a performance of *The Death of Hector*, by Luce de Lancival, I never could hear the lines declaimed which told of the effect of Achilles' presence on the Trojan army, without thinking of Prince Murat. We may in fact institute such a parallel. Of almost gigantic stature, which alone would have made him remarkable, he sought by all possible means to attract attention, as if he thought to dazzle his would-be destroyers. His countenance, with its powerful, regular features, his large flashing blue eyes, fierce moustache, and long black hair falling in ringlets over the collar of his doublet, were the first causes of surprise; and to this the richest, most elegant costume ever worn on the stage or elsewhere—a Polish coat brilliantly embroidered and fastened by a gilt belt, to which was attached a small straight sword, loose breeches embroidered with gold, and nankeen boots, a large hat ornamented with gold and a huge ostrich plume, together with a lovely aigrette of heron's feathers. The King's horse, one of the biggest and strongest procurable, was covered with a sky-blue saddle-cloth, the saddle of Hungarian or Turkish pattern,

richly chased, with bridle and spurs to match. All these things in their splendour made the King of Naples a personage who stood aloof from others, inspiring admiration and terror. That, however, which, so to speak, idealised him, was a valour truly chivalric which often bordered on rashness, as if danger for him did not exist. The Emperor never found fault with such temerity; it may be that he did not wholly approve of it, yet he rarely omitted to praise it.

During the 28th the Emperor visited the battle-field, which presented an appalling sight. He gave orders that everything possible should be done to relieve the sufferings of the wounded, and to help the townsfolk and peasants whose lands and houses had been ravaged, sacked, and burnt. Then he rode up to the heights, whence he could watch the course followed by the retreating enemy. Nearly all his personal attendants accompanied him on this occasion. They brought before him a peasant from Nothlitz, a little village where two days previously the Czar and the King of Prussia had established their headquarters. Questioned by the Duke of Vicenza, the fellow stated that an exalted personage had been brought in wounded to headquarters at Nothlitz. When hit

he had been riding next to the Emperor of Russia, who appeared to be deeply interested in his fate. He had been removed to headquarters at Nothlitz on a stretcher made of Cossacks' lances, his only covering being a rain-drenched cloak. On reaching Nothlitz, the Czar's surgeon had operated upon him, and he had afterwards been carried to Dippodiswalde, escorted by a heavy escort.

On learning these details, Napoleon felt certain that the wounded man was Prince Schwartzenberg. "He was a brave fellow," said he, "and I am sorry for him." Then, after a pause:

"I am sure it is he; the warning has been verified! I have always thought that catastrophe of the fire the night he gave that ball was an evil omen. It is plain now that it was to him that the omen was addressed."

After further enquiry, however, it transpired that Prince Schwartzenberg had not been wounded, but was safe and sound. It was he who was directing the retreat of the Austrian army. Who, then, could the wounded dignitary be? Conjectures were rife when the Prince de Neufchâtel received from the King of Saxony a dog-collar, which had been picked up at Nothlitz and bore the inscription, "I belong to General Moreau."

This was but a slight clue, but soon further news came to confirm our suspicions. Thus, directly he bore arms against his country, Moreau met his death, he who so often had faced the enemy's bullets. History has not spared him, and yet, despite their long estrangement, I am able to affirm that Napoleon was not unmoved at hearing of Moreau's death, indignant though he had been to think that so famous a French officer could have fought against France and donned the Russian cockade.

In both camps this unlooked-for death created a great sensation. Our soldiers saw in it a just punishment from Heaven, and an omen favourable to the Emperor. However that may be, the following particulars came to my knowledge shortly afterwards, being communicated to me by General Moreau's own valet.

On the 27th the Sovereigns of Russia, Austria, and Prussia had been present at the battle, being stationed on the heights of Nothlitz. When it was obvious that they had lost the day, they withdrew. It was during this battle that General Moreau was wounded by a cannon-ball near the Dresden trenches. About four p.m. they took him to a house at Nothlitz owned by a merchant named

Salir. Here the Emperors of Russia and Austria had established their headquarters. Both the general's legs were amputated below the knee. When the operation was over, he asked for some food and a cup of tea. They brought him three fried eggs and some tea; he only took the latter. About seven p.m. he was placed on a stretcher, and removed that same evening to Passendorf. He was carried by Russian soldiers. He passed the night at the country-seat of M. Tritscher. There he only took some more tea, and complained greatly of his sufferings. Next day, the 28th of August, at four in the morning, he was removed to Dippodiswalde, where he ate a little white bread and drank a glass of lemonade at a baker's named Watz. An hour later he had got within easy distance of the Bohemian frontier. The Russians carried him on a sort of truck borrowed from the commissariat, and during his journey he continually screamed with pain.

These are the particulars concerning Moreau's death that I was able to obtain. He did not linger long, but the end came soon. The same ball which shattered both his legs cut off the arm of Prince Ipsilanti, who was aide-de-camp to the Czar. So that if by ill deeds one may repair ill-

doing, it could be said that the cannon-ball which carried off General Kirschner and Marshal Duroc had that day been returned to the enemy. Yet this were in truth but sorry consolation.

By the foregoing facts, and, above all, by the victory, seemingly decisive, at Dresden, it is plain that our men were strengthened and encouraged by the Emperor's all-powerful presence. With him as their leader they had achieved success after success. Unfortunately, at certain points far removed from the line of operations, this was not the case. Seeing, however, that the allies had been routed by the troops which he commanded in person, sure, besides, that General Vandamme would hold the position which, through General Haxo, he had instructed him to maintain, the Emperor came back to his original idea of marching on Berlin; in fact, he was proceeding to make the necessary dispositions for this when the fatal news came that Vandamme, the victim of his own hardihood, had disappeared, while his ten thousand men had been outnumbered and cut to pieces. He was believed to be dead, and it was not until later that we knew that he had been taken prisoner with part of the troops. We likewise heard that, carried away by his natural intrepidity and unable to resist attacking an enemy which seemed to

be no stronger than himself, Vandamme had quitted his entrenchments and assumed the offensive. At first he had been successful, but afterwards, when he sought to resume his position, he found that it had been captured by the Prussians. Perceiving this, he fought with all the courage of despair; but it was in vain, and General Kleist bore him in triumph to Prague as a prisoner. It was in speaking of Vandamme's audacious attempt that the Emperor made the justly-admired remark, "For an enemy in flight one must build either a bridge of gold or a wall of steel."

The Emperor listened in his usual calm way to all the details of this sudden reverse. More than once, however, he expressed his astonishment at Vandamme's deplorable rashness, nor could he imagine how so experienced a general had been induced to quit his entrenchments; yet the harm was done, and in a case like this the Emperor never wasted time in futile recriminations.

"There, you see," said he to the Duke de Bassano, "that's what war is—up one minute and down the next!"

After giving various orders to the army and his generals, the Emperor left Dresden on the evening of the 3rd of September to endeavour to win back what

he had lost by Vandamme's blunder. But this check, the first since the resumption of hostilities, proved the signal for a long series of reverses. One might have said that victory, after making a final effort on our behalf at Dresden, had at last grown weary. The rest of the campaign was one succession of disasters, aggravated by treachery of all kinds, which terminated in the horrible catastrophe of Leipzig. Already, before leaving Dresden, news came of the desertion to the enemy of a Westphalian regiment, with arms and baggage.

The Emperor left Marshal Saint-Cyr in Dresden with thirty thousand men, and injunctions to hold the place as long as he possibly could; His Majesty was anxious to save this capital at any price. The month of September was spent in marches and counter-marches round about Dresden, while no event of decisive importance occurred. Alas! the Emperor was never to see the Dresden garrison again. Matters having now become more serious, His Majesty was compelled promptly to oppose the progress of the allies. That model of a loyal Prince, the King of Saxony, wished to accompany the Emperor, and drove off with the Queen and Princess Augusta, escorted by officers of the Imperial staff. Two days later, at Eilenburg

on the Mulda, a juncture was effected between the Saxons and the French. The Emperor exhorted these allies, whom he believed to be faithful, to maintain the independence of their country. He pointed out how Saxony was being threatened by Prussia, who hankered after her fairest provinces; he reminded them of the proclamations of their Sovereign, his noble and faithful ally. Finally, he apostrophised them in the name of military glory, and in conclusion exhorted them to let that ever guide them, and to show themselves worthy rivals of the soldiers of the Grand Army, with whom they made common cause, and by whose side they were about to fight. The Emperor's speech was repeated and interpreted to the Saxons by the Duke of Vicenza. This language, uttered by one whom they regarded as their Sovereign and the saviour of their city, apparently made a profound impression upon them. Thus the troops marched hopefully, trustfully forward, far from foreseeing the speedy desertion of these same men who had so repeatedly hailed the Emperor with shouts of enthusiasm while swearing to fight for him to the death.

Napoleon's plan was to fall upon Blücher and the Crown Prince of Sweden, who were only

separated by the river from the French army. Accordingly, we left Eilenburg, and took the direction of Düben. The King of Saxony and his family stayed behind together, with the Duke de Bassano and a strong detachment of artillery. Blücher and Bernadotte had fallen back, leaving Berlin undefended. The Emperor's scheme then became manifest; he was pushing forward, not to Leipzig, but to Berlin. Düben was only to be a point of juncture for the several corps who should simultaneously advance upon the Prussian capital which twice before Napoleon had captured.

Unfortunately, the time had gone by when a mere hint of the Emperor's intentions was regarded as a signal of victory. The various generals in command, hitherto submissive, now ventured to disapprove of such a plan. It appalled them. When it became known that the Emperor was going to march on Berlin, a general feeling of discontent prevailed. Commanding officers who had escaped all the horrible disasters of Moscow, and the perils of this second German campaign, were worn-out, and wishful, it may be, to enjoy at last the tranquil pleasures of home. Some went so far as to accuse Napoleon of desiring to prolong the war. "Hasn't he killed enough men?" cried they.

"Must we all perish?" Such complainings, too, were not made covertly and in secret, but were uttered out loud for all to hear. Indeed, they actually reached His Majesty's ears, who deemed it in such cases more prudent to be deaf.

While this feeling of discontent existed among the officers in command, news came of Bavaria's desertion to the enemy. This only served to heighten the general vexation, and it was then that the strange spectacle presented itself of all the staff officers in a body imploring the Emperor to abandon his plan of attacking Berlin, and urging him to march on Leipzig. I saw how deeply the Emperor suffered in having to listen to such remonstrances. Such protests were most respectfully proffered, and for two whole days the Emperor remained in a state of indecision. How long those forty-eight hours seemed! No camp-tent nor lonely hut had a drearier look than this gloomy château at Düben. Here it was that for the first time in my life I saw the Emperor absolutely idle. Indecision so completely dominated him that his whole character seemed changed. To ceaseless activity succeeded inconceivable apathy and listlessness. For nearly a whole day I saw him lying on a sofa near a table littered with papers and

maps, to which he gave no heed, his sole occupation being slowly to write big letters on a sheet of paper. This he did for hours at a time. It was then that he was wavering, feeling uncertain whether to obey his own will, or yield to the entreaties of his generals. After two days of most painful anxiety, he gave in to them; and from that moment everything was lost. Would to God he had not listened to their complainings! If he had but followed his own inner impulse which swayed and governed him! How often, when it was too late, he sadly remarked, "If I had let myself be guided by my first impulse, I might have avoided many disasters. It is by yielding to the wishes of others that I have failed!"

The signal for departure was given. Then, as if the army were prouder at having triumphed over the Emperor's will than over the enemy, all the troops gave way to almost immoderate expressions of delight. Each face was radiant with joy. "We're going home, going back to France!" was the universal cry; "back to our dear wives and children!" Marshal Augereau was the only one who, with the Emperor, did not share the general glee. The Duke de Castiglione had just arrived at headquarters after having partly avenged Vandamme's defeat. Like Napoleon, he too was filled with dark fore-

bodings concerning this retrograde movement; and he knew that further treachery and desertions awaited us from those who but now were our allies, and therefore had thorough knowledge of our positions. As for His Majesty, he yielded while yet full of the conviction that mischance would ensue; and I remember his ending a long interview with the Marshal with these words, uttered as an augury of ill: "They wished for it!"

The Emperor when marching on Düben had a force of 125,000 men. He took this route in hopes of finding Blücher still on the Mulda. But the Prussian general had crossed that river, which greatly helped to give credence to a widespread rumour. This was to the effect that, at a council of the allied Sovereigns held previously at Prague, it had been decided that as far as possible a battle was to be avoided wherever Napoleon was commanding his troops in person, and that operations were only to be directed against those parts of his army which were commanded by his subordinates. Certainly no compliment more brilliant than this could possibly have been paid to the Emperor's genius, yet it served to hamper his resources and paralyse his hitherto omnipotent method of warfare.

However that may be, we took the road to

Leipzig, arriving there early on the morning of the 15th of October. At this moment the King of Naples was engaged in combat with Prince Schwartzenberg, and His Majesty, hearing the sound of guns, passed straight through the town and proceeded to the plain, where evidently a severe engagement was in progress. Upon his return he received the members of the Royal family of Saxony.

During his brief stay at Leipzig the Emperor performed an act of clemency which doubtless will be adjudged most meritorious if the gravity of our actual position be considered. A merchant named Moldrecht was accused and convicted of having distributed copies of a proclamation in which the Crown Prince of Sweden invited the Saxons to desert from the French army. Being tried by court-martial, Moldrecht was forced to plead guilty, since several parcels of the seditious address were found in his possession. He was condemned to death. His heartbroken relatives flung themselves at the feet of the King of Saxony, but the facts were so plain and so heinous that all excuse might not avail, and the loyal monarch dared not show indulgence for a crime committed less against himself than against his ally. To the unhappy family one last resource remained, and this was to appeal to the

Emperor. But he was difficult of approach. M. Leborgne d'Ideville, secretary and interpreter, was so kind as to undertake to place a petition on the Emperor's desk. Having read this, His Majesty granted a reprieve, which was really equivalent to a full pardon, and in course of time Moldrecht was set free.

At this period Leipzig formed the centre of operations. Engagements took place continually, and lasted from the 16th to the 18th. It was then that the Saxon army deserted, and joined Bernadotte's forces. The Emperor had now only 110,000 men left. When hostilities were resumed the odds against us were two to one; now they were three to one. The 18th, as is well known, proved the fatal day. Seated on a red morocco camp-stool by the bivouac fires, the Emperor was dictating the orders for the night to the Prince de Neufchâtel, when two artillery officers came to inform His Majesty of the exhausted state of the ammunition supplies. Two hundred thousand bomb-shells had been fired during the last five days; the reserves were exhausted; there was scarcely ammunition enough to last another two hours. The nearest depôts were at Magdeburg and Erfurt, whence it was impossible to get supplies in time. Thus the only thing that could be done was

to retreat. Orders to this effect were accordingly issued. Before they were executed, however, a desperate battle took place, in which 300,000 men fought in a space so narrow that it was not over eight leagues in circumference. Before leaving Dresden the Emperor instructed Prince Poniatowski, who had just got his marshal's *bâton*, to defend one of the suburbs. "You are to defend the southern district," said His Majesty.

"But, Sire," replied the Prince, "I have so few men!"

"Never mind; make the most of what you have."

"Very well, Sire; we'll stand to our guns. We're all ready to die for Your Majesty."

The Emperor, touched by such a reply, held out his arms to the Prince, who embraced him, with tears in his eyes. It was a last farewell, the last interview which the Prince ever had with his Royal master, for soon afterwards he died a glorious death.

At nine o'clock in the morning the Emperor said good-bye to the members of the Royal family of Saxony. The leave-taking, though brief, was affectionate and sorrowful. The King seemed most indignant at the behaviour of his troops. "I could never have believed it of them," said he. "I thought

better of my Saxons than that. They are mere cowards."

As Napoleon urged the King to quit Leipzig to avoid the dangers of a capitulation which seemed inevitable, the veteran monarch refused, saying, "No, no, I shall stay; you have done your part, and it would be abusing your generosity to ask you to risk your life by remaining here a moment longer to console us."

While the King was speaking, loud firing was heard without, and then the Queen and Princess Augusta added their entreaties to those of the aged monarch. In the excess of their terror they already pictured the Emperor being seized and strangled by the Prussians. Officers now came in to say that the Crown Prince of Sweden had forced an entrance into one of the suburbs; that Bennigsen, Blücher and Schwartzenberg were surrounding the town, and that our troops were forced to adopt a sort of house-to-house defence. The Emperor's peril was imminent. There was not a moment to be lost. Napoleon, therefore, at last consented to go, and the King of Saxony accompanied him to the foot of the staircase, where they embraced each other for the last time.

CHAPTER XI

The horrors of Leipzig—Exits from the city closed—Our difficulty in escaping—The mill at Lindenau—Napoleon sleeps—The Elster bridge blown up—The Emperor's fury—A succession of disasters—Marshal Macdonald swims across the river—Deaths of General Dumortier and Prince Poniatowski—The Emperor's grief—Disposal of the Prince's remains—Two days at Erfurt—The King of Naples takes leave of Napoleon—The King of Saxony a prisoner—The Emperor is indignant—Brilliant victory at Hanau—We reach Mayence—The Emperor's letter to the Empress—His return to France—Arrival at Saint-Cloud—The Emperor questions me—Hopes of peace—M. de Saint-Aignan—Vain hopes—The bliss of mediocrity.

NOTHING was more difficult for us than to get out of Leipzig, as the city was entirely surrounded by the enemy. A proposal had been made to the Emperor to set fire to the suburbs to check the advance of the allies and cover the French retreat, but the Emperor indignantly refused to entertain it, not wishing to bid farewell to his loyal friend the King of Saxony by leaving him as a memento a capital in flames. Having released him from his vows of allegiance, bidding him look to his own welfare alone, the Emperor made for the Ranstadt gate, but

found it so blocked up that it was absolutely impossible to cut his way through, and he was thus obliged once more to traverse the town, go out by the north gate and regain the point whence, as it seemed to him, it alone would be possible to move towards Erfurt, by marching along the western bulwarks. The enemy were not wholly masters of the town, and it was generally felt that it could have been defended for some time longer had the Emperor not shrunk from exposing it to all the horrors of a siege. The Duke de Ragusa continued to hold his own in the Halle suburb against Blücher's repeated onslaughts, and Marshal Ney, on his part, manfully kept General Woronzow's Prussians at bay.

Valour such as this had at last to give way to excess of numbers and to treachery. When the conflict outside the gates of Leipzig was at its height, a battalion of Bavarians, who up till then had fought valiantly on the French side, suddenly abandoned the gate of St. Peter, which they had been charged to defend. Entrance to the city was thus given to the enemy, and from that moment, so I have heard from eye-witnesses, the streets of Leipzig presented a truly shocking sight. Our men, being forced to retreat, pluckily contested every

inch of ground. Then came an irreparable disaster which drove Napoleon well-nigh to despair.

After countless hindrances, we at last managed to get across the Elster close to Lindenau Mill. I seem to see the Emperor now giving orders to his officers, and despatching these along the route with instructions to let all the other army divisions know of their rallying-point. That day, after a severe reverse, for the odds were so heavy against us, his thoughtful solicitude for all would have made one think that Napoleon had just gained another decisive victory. But he seemed utterly worn-out, and he had absolute need of a few moments' repose. He slept calmly amid the cannons' thunder until roused by the noise of a fearful explosion. Shortly afterwards the King of Naples and Marshal Augereau came into camp, bringing awful news. The big bridge across the Elster had just been blown up, and it was the only point of communication with the rear-guard, which still numbered twenty thousand men. They were commanded by Marshal Macdonald, and had not yet crossed the river.

"So that's how they execute my orders!" cried the Emperor, as he convulsively grasped his head with both hands. Then he remained silent, as if lost in his thoughts.

His Majesty, as a matter of fact, had given orders for all the bridges across the Elster to be blown up, but not before the entire French army had crossed the river. Nor was his consternation simulated when he learned that twenty thousand of his brave soldiers were separated from him, perhaps for ever.

How many disasters now followed upon the destruction of that bridge! And what heroism marked this dire catastrophe! Marshal Macdonald perceiving that he was cut off from the army, swam across the Elster on horseback. General Dumortier sought to follow his example, but he perished in the stream, together with many other valiant officers and men, for all had sworn never to surrender to the enemy, and only a very few were taken prisoners. Prince Poniatowski's death was a great grief to the Emperor, indeed it was deeply lamented by the entire staff. Finding no escape from falling into the enemy's hands, this brave prince preferred death to dishonour. Like others he leapt into the Elster, but failed to stem the current and was drowned. Later on we heard that his body was not recovered until five days afterwards, when a fisherman dragged it ashore. Such was the melancholy and yet glorious end of one of

the most brilliant, most chivalric officers who ever lent lustre to the brave and splendid company of the generals of France.

Dearth of ammunition, however, forced the Emperor to fall back, in perfect order, be it noted, upon Erfurt, a town well stocked with provisions, forage, ammunition, and all the necessary equipments of an army. His Majesty arrived there on the 23rd, having had daily skirmishes with the enemy in order to cover his retreat, fighting a force nearly five times as strong as his own. He only stopped two days at Erfurt, leaving this place on the 25th, after bidding farewell to his brother-in-law, the King of Naples, whom he was never to see again. I myself witnessed part of this final interview, when I thought I noticed a certain constraint in the King of Naples' bearing, which, by the way, the Emperor did not seem to remark. It is true, the King of Naples did not acquaint Napoleon with his hasty departure, nor did the Emperor know that Murat had been visited privately by an Austrian general.[1] It was only reported to him later, when he showed but little surprise; indeed, he had received such a series of sudden

1 It was the Count de Mier, who was instructed to give the King a guarantee that his kingdom should remain untouched if he abandoned the Emperor's cause. This he did; but what has he gained thereby?

and overwhelming blows of late that he appeared almost insensible to them. One might have deemed him wholly dominated by his fatalist views; yet while he met his own misfortunes impassively, Napoleon let all his indignation burst forth on hearing that the allied Sovereigns had adjudged the King of Saxony their prisoner and a traitor, just because he was the only one of them all who had remained staunch to him. Truly, if Fortune had chanced to smile upon us as in the past, the King of Saxony would have found himself ruler of one of the vastest sovereignties in Europe. But Fortune proved more than hostile. Even our victories brought us but barren glory.

Thus, for instance, at Hanau the French troops covered themselves with glory, where they opposed and defeated a large force of Austrians and Bavarians under General Wrede. Six thousand of the enemy were taken prisoners, and the approaches to Mayence lay open to us. We hoped to reach that city without further hindrances. It was on the 2nd of November, after a fortnight's march from Leipzig, that we at last got to the banks of the Rhine and could enjoy some slight feeling of safety.

After devoting five days to reorganising the army, issuing instructions, and nominating the several marshals to the posts they were to fill during his

absence, the Emperor left Mayence on the 7th, and on the 9th lay at Saint-Cloud, which place he entered, preceded by certain standards captured from the Bavarians between Erfurt and Frankfort. The Prince of Neufchâtel's aide-de-camp, M. Leconteulx, had brought these trophies to the War Office, reaching Paris two days before His Majesty. They had already been presented to the Empress, to whom Napoleon had offered them, with the following lines of greeting:

"MY DEAREST WIFE,—I send you twenty flags captured by my troops at the battles of Wachau, Leipzig and Hanau; it is a homage that I am delighted to pay you. I should like you to regard it as a mark of my great satisfaction at your conduct during the Regency with which I entrusted you."

Under the Consulate and during the first six years of the Empire, when after a campaign the Emperor returned to Paris, it meant that that campaign was closed; news of peace always preceded his arrival. For the second time when he returned from Mayence this was not the case. This time, as when he came back from Smorghoni, the Emperor left war in full swing behind him,

and returned, not to present France with the fruits of his victories, but to ask her for fresh supplies of troops and money to save further humiliating reverses. Despite this difference in our fortunes, the nation, to all outward appearance at least, greeted His Majesty with the same enthusiasm as ever. Yet I must admit that everyone was heartily sick of war, and that all my friends spoke to me of the need for peace.

In the palace, even, I heard members of the suite use similar language; before His Majesty, however, they expressed themselves very differently. When, as often happened, he deigned to question me as to what I had heard, I always told him the exact truth, and whenever I mentioned the word peace, he would repeatedly exclaim, "Peace? Peace? Nobody wants it more than I do myself. It is they who don't want it. The more I grant, the more they exact."

An extraordinary event which happened the very day His Majesty reached Saint-Cloud gave rise to the belief that the allies were about to enter upon fresh negotiations. The French minister to the Court of Saxony, M. de Saint-Aignan, had been forcibly conveyed to Frankfort, where M. de Metternich, Prince Schwartzenberg, and the Russian

and Prussian statesmen were assembled. Overtures of a most pacific nature were here made to him, and he was at once permitted to depart in order to give the Emperor a detailed account of these. Of these proposals I can say nothing, except that they appeared unworthy to be entertained by the Emperor, for now there was a rumour of a new congress to be held at Mannheim, the Duke of Vicenza having been appointed as His Majesty's plenipotentiary. It was also said that, to give his mission greater splendour, he had been entrusted with the portfolio for foreign affairs. I remember that such news inspired fresh hope, and was very favourably received, for, though doubtless prejudice had much to do with it, no one could deny that popular feeling was against the Duke de Bassano, whom it was now believed would be replaced by the Duke of Vicenza. It was commonly thought that the Duke de Bassano forestalled the Emperor's most secret schemes of conquest, and was averse to peace. From a reply made to me at Fontainebleau by His Majesty, it will be seen how baseless were all such rumours.

Ere long, however, it transpired that the Saint-Aignan incident was only a snare, a time-worn diplomatic device used by the foreigners in order to

gain time while buoying up the Emperor with false hopes. In fact, a month had not yet elapsed; there had not even been time to complete the exchange of preliminary documents on the subject, when the Emperor got to hear of the famous Declaration of Frankfort, by which, far from seeking to negotiate with Napoleon, the allies endeavoured to separate his cause from that of France. What a mass of intrigue it all was! How blessed indeed are those average persons who, by virtue of their mediocrity, are not condemned to live in such a labyrinth of hypocrisy and gilded deceit! The sad truth leaked out that what the foreigners wanted was a war of extermination, when hope was succeeded by fear. But the genius of His Majesty was undaunted, and all his efforts were now concentrated towards bringing himself once more face to face with the enemy, no longer with a view to conquer their territory, but to ward off and effectually prevent their invasion of our beloved France.

CHAPTER XII

German secret societies—The Emperor and the freemasons—Cambacérès' presidential gravity—Fanatical assassins—Promenade beside the Elbe—A Saxon magistrate—Religious zeal of a Protestant—The "Tugendverein"—Sects in 1813—The Black Knights and the Black Legion—The Order of Louise—Baron de Nostitz—Germany divided by three sectarian leaders—Madame Brede and the ex-Elector of Hesse-Cassel—Intrigue of Baron de Nostitz—M. de Stein's secretaries—Real aim of secret societies—Their importance—The Emperor makes enquiries.

IN speaking of the year 1813, mention must not be omitted of the incredible number of conversions to the various secret societies that had latterly been formed in Italy and in Germany. While still only First Consul, Napoleon had not only shown no opposition to the re-opening of masonic lodges, but there were even grounds for supposing that he secretly favoured these. He felt quite sure that nothing harmful to himself personally, or dangerous to his government, would result from such assemblies, since freemasonry counted among its most skilled leaders the foremost statesmen and public characters. Moreover, though there were occasional black sheep

in such societies, it would have been utterly impossible for any plot to have escaped the vigilance of the police. The Emperor sometimes alluded to them, but always as childish institutions designed to amuse simpletons, and I can aver that he laughed heartily when told that Cambacérès when presiding at a masonic banquet was just as grave as at a Council of State. Yet the Emperor's indifference did not extend to the societies so well known in Italy as *Carbonari*, and in Germany by other denominations. Indeed, it must be admitted that after the exploits of two young Germans who had been converted to "illuminism," there were grounds for His Majesty's uneasiness as to these "guilds of virtue," where young fanatics became transformed into assassins.

Of the *Carbonari* I heard nothing, since no details reached us from Italy. As for the secret societies of Germany, I recollect that during our stay at Dresden I heard these spoken of with some alarm by a Saxon magistrate, with whom I had the honour of being acquainted. He was a man of about sixty, who spoke French well, adding the gravity of age to his abundant share of Teutonic phlegm. In his youth he had lived in France, his studies having been partly pursued at the Sorrèze

college. His friendliness towards myself I attribute to his pleasure at being able to speak about a country the memory of which he always cherished. His name was M. Gentz, but was no relation of the diplomatist of the same name attached to the Austrian Embassy. He was a Protestant, and very devout; indeed, I may say that I never knew a man of simpler tastes or of deeper piety. I cannot say what he thought of the Emperor, for he rarely spoke of him. One day when walking along the banks of the Elbe, our talk turned upon the subject of secret societies in Germany, a subject of which I was totally ignorant. As I asked him sundry questions thereanent, M. Gentz said: "It must not be supposed that all these German secret societies, which are increasing in so extraordinarily rapid a way, are protected by the Sovereigns. The Prussian Government watches their growth with terror, though it tries to profit by them, so as to give the colour of nationality to the war which it wages against you since the revolt of General Yorck. Such societies in former times were the object of the bitterest persecution. Not long ago, for instance, the Prussian Government took severe measures for the suppression of a society called the *Tugendverein*. It succeeded. But directly the society was dissolved, it formed

itself into three others which were to be presided over by members of the old *Tugendverein*, other names being carefully given to these guilds to prevent detection.

"Dr. Jahn constituted himself the chief of the so-called 'Black Knights,' who afterwards became known as the 'Black Legion,' presided over by Colonel Lützow. The late Queen of Prussia is a sort of tutelary goddess for all such societies; while still living she gave Baron de Nostitz a silver chain, which served to provide the name for a new society styled the 'Order of Louise.' Finally, M. Lang had declared himself head of the 'Order of Concordists,' to replace others of a similar type in vogue at the universities.

"My functions as a magistrate," added M. Gentz, "frequently enabled me to get exact information as to these new institutions, and what I tell you now you may regard as absolutely authentic. The three chiefs I have mentioned to all appearance direct three different societies, but it is quite plain that the three are really only one, as these personages have all resolved to imitate the several errors of the *Tugendverein*. They have merely taken different sections of Germany in order that their influence may be more widely diffused. M. Jahn has specially

taken charge of Prussia; M. Lang is in the north, and Baron de Nostitz in the south of Germany. The latter, knowing what influence a woman would have upon young fellows, chose as his associate a very handsome actress from Prague, named Madame Brede, and among members of the Order of Louise her conquests have been most important, and bid fair to be more so if the French should experience reverses. The ex-Elector of Hesse, who joined the league at Madame Brede's instigation, immediately after his enrolment accepted the post of Grand Master of the Order of Louise, and on the day of his installation handed M. de Nostitz the necessary funds for the formation and equipment of a corps of volunteers numbering seven hundred men destined to enter the service of Prussia. It is true that having once secured this sum the Baron took no pains whatever to form the said corps, at which the ex-Elector was much annoyed, but by dint of intrigue and cleverness Madame Brede managed to effect a reconciliation. It was, in fact, shown that M. de Nostitz had not appropriated the funds in question, but had used them for other purposes instead of for the armament of a volunteer corps. Undoubtedly M. de Nostitz is the ablest and most zealous of the three chiefs. I do not know him

personally, but I know that he is a man capable of exercising an immense influence upon his hearers. Thus it is that he captivated the Prussian statesman, M. de Stein, so that the latter was induced to place two of his secretaries at the disposal of Baron de Nostitz to edit all the pamphlets with which Germany just now is flooded. But I would fain impress upon you that this hatred of France is, after all, a secondary thing. The prime object of all these societies is the overthrowing of existing governments in Germany, and their fundamental doctrine the establishment of a system of absolute equality. So true is this, that at one time the *Tugendverein* thought of proclaiming throughout all Germany the sovereignty of the people, openly asserting that war ought not to be waged in the name of governments, which, according to them, were merely instruments. I do not know what the definite result of all such machinations may be, but one thing is certain, that, by striving to give themselves importance, these secret societies actually succeed in achieving this. To hear them, one would be inclined to believe that it was they alone who made the King of Prussia resolve to declare war against France, and they openly boast that they will not stop short at that."

Such was the statement which M. Gentz was good enough to make to me with reference to these German secret societies, and when I communicated it to the Emperor, His Majesty condescended to listen to me with much attention, and even made me repeat certain details, which thus served to fix these deeply in my memory. As for the *Carbonari*, there is every reason to believe that they were secretly linked to these German leagues.

CHAPTER XIII

Mayence in an uproar—Convocation of the Legislative Body—General von Wrede's ingratitude—Family troubles—The Emperor's activity redoubled—The buildings of Paris—Troops equipped as by magic—Anxiety of the Parisians—Bad news of the army—Evacuation of Holland—Dresden capitulates—Violation of the treaty—The Emperor indignant—His confidence in me—Death of the Count de Narbonne—Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg—The Emperor's opinion of M. de Narbonne—General Bertrand—Marshal Suchet—Ministerial changes—The Emperor's excursions—He recognises me in the crowd—His merriment—Their Majesties visit the Opera—Popular enthusiasm—Madame Grassini's special performance—The Emperor visits Saint-Denis—His two pages.

In the preceding chapter I digressed somewhat, and must now go back to my souvenirs of Paris after the battle of Leipzig and the Emperor's brief stay at Mayence. To-day I cannot write down the name of this last town without calling to mind the grim spectacle of tumult and confusion which it presented after the glorious victory of Hanau, when the Bavarians got such a sound thrashing, and when, for the first time, they pitted themselves against those in whose ranks they had previously fought. It was in

this affair, I think, that General von Wrede and his family reaped the fruit of their treachery. The General, whom Napoleon had loaded with benefits, was mortally wounded, and all his relatives in the Bavarian service were killed, including Prince d'Oettingen, his son-in-law. Such an event made a deep impression upon the Emperor, for it strengthened his belief in fatalism. It was also at Mayence that the Emperor issued the decree convoking the Legislative Body for the 2nd of December; but, as will be seen, the opening was delayed, and would to God it had been indefinitely postponed, for then His Majesty would have been spared the chagrin caused by symptoms of hostility exhibited now for the first time in most unseemly fashion.

One of the things which most astonished me then was the Emperor's inconceivable activity. Far from diminishing, it seemed each day to increase, as if the exercise of his faculties redoubled their force. At the epoch to which I allude it is impossible for me to give a just idea of the way in which His Majesty's time was filled up. Moreover, since he had seen the Empress and his son, the Emperor regained his usual serenity, and I rarely noticed in him those signs of physical and mental exhaustion which after our return from Moscow he occasionally

failed to hide. He was now more than usually busy in planning the various public edifices with which he designed to embellish Paris. It was a welcome distraction from war schemes and all the grievous news which reached him from the army. Almost daily, troops, equipped as if by enchantment, were promptly reviewed and as promptly despatched across the Rhine, the whole frontier-line being now threatened. The danger, to which we scarcely gave a thought, must have seemed imminent to Parisians, who were not all carried away by the Emperor's strange personal charm, a charm felt by all who ever approached him. In fact, a contingent of troops was now demanded for the first time from the Senate, this to be supplied a year in advance. Each day, too, brought us alarming news. In the course of the autumn we saw the Prince Archtreasurer return, having been forced to quit Holland after its evacuation by our troops, while Marshal Gouvion-Saint-Cyr was obliged to sign a capitulation at Dresden for himself and the thirty thousand men whom he had retained in this place.

This capitulation of Marshal Saint-Cyr will assuredly never fill a place of honour in the history of the Vienna Cabinet. It is not fitting for me to judge of the combination of politics; but I cannot

forget the indignation shown by everyone at the palace when news came of the gross violation of this treaty by our adversaries. The terms of capitulation stated that the Marshal was to return to France in command of his troops, taking part of his artillery with him. Those of the French wounded who remained in Dresden were to be sent home as soon as convalescent, and the date of the Marshal's departure was fixed for the 16th of November. All these things were totally disregarded. Imagine, then, the Emperor's wrath at hearing how, in defiance of all conventions, his troops had been taken prisoner by Prince Schwartzenberg. I was in his room one day when the Prince de Neufchâtel came in.

"You talk to me about peace, forsooth," cried the Emperor, angrily. "How can I trust the word of such people? Look what has just happened at Dresden! No, I tell you, they don't want peace; they only want to gain time. So it behoves us not to lose any." The Prince made no reply; at any rate I did not catch his answer, as just then I left the room. Let me here add that as a proof how perfectly His Majesty trusted me, whenever I entered his study he never stopped short in what he happened to be saying, however important this might be; and I venture to think

that had my memory been a better one, these reminiscences would have proved far more entertaining than they are.

In mentioning all the misfortunes that in successive strokes now assailed the Emperor during the last months of 1813, there is one which I ought not to omit, since it affected His Majesty so deeply. This was the death of Count Louis de Narbonne. Of all those who had not begun their career under his very eyes, M. de Narbonne was perhaps the one to whom Napoleon was most attached. It must be admitted that he had sterling qualities and a most fascinating manner. It was Narbonne whom the Emperor ever deemed fittest to bring diplomatic negotiations to a successful close. Of him, indeed, he once remarked, "Narbonne is a born ambassador." In the palace one knew why the Emperor had appointed him his aide-de-camp at the time of the re-establishment of Marie Louise's household. At first Napoleon had thought of making him lord-in-waiting to the new Empress, but by a cleverly-laid plot she was induced to decline his services; and as a sort of compensation he got the post of aide-de-camp to His Majesty. In France, at that time, no appointment was more highly prized. Foreign princes,

royalties even, solicited this favour, yet in vain. Among those I could mention were Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, who married Princess Charlotte of England, and refused the throne of Greece after failing to obtain an appointment of aide-de-camp to Napoleon.

I cannot say that nobody at Court felt jealous of M. de Narbonne, but I forget the names of these envious persons. Enough to state that he soon became a great favourite, and the Emperor appreciated his high qualities more and more. I think it was at Dresden that Napoleon remarked that he had never really got to know the Vienna Cabinet until Narbonne's keen nose had scented out the old diplomats. After the sham negotiations already referred to, which went on all the while the Dresden armistice lasted, M. de Narbonne remained in Germany, where the Emperor appointed him Governor of Torgau. It was here that, on the 17th of November, he died from injuries sustained by a fall from his horse. Since the deaths of Marshal Duroc and Prince Poniatowski, I never remember to have seen the Emperor so profoundly grieved as on this occasion.

Just at the time of M. de Narbonne's death, yet before he knew of it, the Emperor had appointed

General Bertrand to the post of Grand Marshal of the Palace; and all those who knew the General approved the justice of such a choice. His Majesty also made several ministerial changes. Among others, the Duke de Massa was appointed President of the Legislative Body, his functions as Lord Chief Justice being assumed by M. de Molé. The Duke de Bassano resumed his post as Secretary of State, while the Duke of Vicenza was made Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I have said that it was during the autumn of 1813 that His Majesty used to inspect the public buildings. He usually went on foot by himself to those in the Louvre or the Tuileries, and he afterwards rode to more distant places accompanied by one or two officers and M. Fontaine, the architect. One day, towards the close of November, having taken advantage of His Majesty's absence to go to the Faubourg Saint-Germain, I suddenly chanced to meet him in the Rue de Tournon as he was returning to the Luxembourg, and great was my delight to hear the ringing shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" as he approached. I was swept by the surging crowd almost under his horse's hoofs, yet I never imagined that the Emperor had recognised me. Upon his return, however, while I was helping him to change his dress, His Majesty laughingly remarked,

"Ah, you rogue! and what were you doing in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, eh? I see what it is! You play the spy upon me when I go out!" The Emperor joked on in this way, for he was in the best of humours, which led me to suppose that he had been satisfied with his visit.

When, at this period, the Emperor was troubled about various matters, I noticed that he sought to find relief by appearing in public. This he did more frequently than before, although in simple style and quite without ostentation. He even went several times to the theatre, where, thanks to M. de Rémusat's kindness, I frequently gained admission, and on these occasions the house presented a most brilliant appearance. Indeed, on the night that *Nina*, a ballet, was given at the Opera, when Their Majesties entered the Royal box one could never have believed that among his subjects the Emperor had now got enemies. True, the widows and orphans were absent; yet I never saw such a vehement outburst of enthusiasm, and to His Majesty this was perhaps more gratifying than the most glorious of his victories. The idea of being beloved by the French nation moved him deeply. That night he spoke to me about it, as proud, if I may venture to say so, as a child that has gained a

prize. In his unaffected, simple fashion he repeatedly said, "My wife, my dear Louise, how pleased she must have been!" The fact is, in Paris, folk were so eager to see the Emperor at the theatre that all the boxes facing his own were instantly bought up at a high price.

Some time after the first performance of the ballet *Nina* the Emperor went to the Théâtre Italien, then at the Odéon, where Nazzolini's *Cleopatra* was given for the benefit of Madame Grassini. This famous singer, famous for more reasons than one, had only recently made her *début* before the Paris public. I think this was her third or fourth appearance; and, to be quite exact, I ought to state that she failed to make the impression which her immense fame had led us to expect. It was long since the Emperor had received her privately. Hitherto, however, the strains of her dulcet voice and of Crescentini's had been reserved for the select and privileged few who filled the theatres of Saint-Cloud and the Tuileries.

On this particular occasion the Emperor showed himself most generous to the fair *bénéficiaire*, but had no interview with her, for, as some poet might have put it, this Paris Cleopatra had no new Antony to enslave.

Thus, as we may see, for some evenings the Emperor broke away from onerous public affairs and went to the theatre, less for the play's sake than for the enjoyment of appearing in public. He also took great interest in all public institutions. There was one towards which he showed special favour. This was the school for young ladies of the Legion of Honour, which Madame Campan managed, first at Ecouen and afterwards at Saint-Denis. The Emperor went there in the month of November, and I remember an anecdote in connection with his visit.

It was a rule that, with the exception of the Emperor, no male might enter the precincts of the said school. But His Majesty never went unaccompanied, and, though the thing was irregular, the members of his suite always gained admittance also. Besides his aides-de-camp, two pages usually accompanied him. One evening, after visiting the school, His Majesty laughingly said to me as I was about to undress him, "Well, what do you think? My pages want to ape their seniors. Do you know what they do? Every time I go to Saint-Denis they quarrel about who is to be on duty! Ha! ha!" And the Emperor, chuckling, rubbed his hands together, as he repeatedly muttered, "Little rogues!"

Then he suddenly observed, "Constant, you know, I should have been a very bad page myself; such an idea would never have entered my head. After all, they're good little fellows, and some have turned out excellent officers. Perhaps some marriage or other may come of it. Who knows?"

CHAPTER XIV

Anniversary of the coronation—The Emperor's love for France —His Majesty's popularity increases—Visit to the Faubourg Saint-Antoine—Public enthusiasm—It is misunderstood —Volunteers for the Guards—The Emperor at the Tuileries —The Emperor's last ally forsakes him—Armistice between Denmark and Russia—The French in Spain—Negotiations between the Duke of Vicenza and M. de Metternich—The Duke de Massa and the Legislative Body—Opening of the session—The Emperor's speech—Proof of Napoleon's wish for peace—Death of General Dupont-Derval—Pension for his widow — The Emperor's distaste for divorce and his respect for marriage.

ONCE again, and for the last time, the festival of His Majesty's coronation was observed in Paris. Countless congratulatory addresses were offered to the Emperor from all parts of the Empire, all protesting the deepest attachment and devotion which in this time of misfortune seemed to increase. Alas! four months served to show the value of such protestations. Yet so unanimous were these at the time, that the Emperor could but believe in their sincerity. How could he doubt this after an incident like the following?

Towards the close of 1813, or the beginning of 1814, the Emperor visited the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Such was his easy good-nature on this occasion, that some of the inhabitants were emboldened to approach and address him. This is an exact report of a conversation which took place between His Majesty and several of the local residents:

An Inhabitant. Is it true, as they say, that things are going so badly?

The Emperor. I can't say that they are going over well.

The Inhabitant. Well, how will it all end?

The Emperor. God only knows.

The Inhabitant. Why, is the enemy going to invade France?

The Emperor. Very likely; and they may get as far as here if nobody helps me. I have not got a million arms, and cannot do everything by myself.

Several Voices. We'll help you, we'll help you!

More Voices. Aye! aye! You can count upon us!

The Emperor. In that case the enemy will be beaten, and we shall maintain all our glory.

Several Voices. But what have we got to do?

The Emperor. Enlist and fight.

Another Voice. We're ready enough to do that, but on certain conditions.

The Emperor. Well, well, speak out; let's hear what they are.

Several Voices. We don't want to cross the frontier.

The Emperor. More you shall.

Several Voices. We want to join the Guards.

The Emperor. All right; you shall join the Guards.

His Majesty had hardly uttered these words when the huge crowd about him shouted out, "Long live the Emperor!" and, growing ever greater, escorted him to the Carrousel gateway of the Tuileries. From the palace we could hear the cheering, upon which, however, the sentries and officials put such an extraordinary interpretation that, believing there was an insurrection, they hurriedly closed the iron palace-gates.

When a few minutes after his arrival I saw the Emperor, he seemed more agitated than pleased, as a noisy mob always made him feel uncomfortable. Yet this visit of His Majesty, which he might have repeated, deeply impressed the populace, and, as its immediate result, more than two thousand men voluntarily enlisted, and formed a new regiment of the Guards.

On Coronation Day, as also on the anniversary of the battle of Austerlitz, the theatres were thrown open to the public free of charge, though the Emperor did not show himself there, as he had often done formerly. There were sports and illuminations; all kinds of food were distributed, and twelve maidens, who each received a dowry from the city of Paris, were married to twelve army veterans. Of all the various ceremonies incidental to the occasion this was the one which most pleased His Majesty, who often mentioned it approvingly, for, if I may be allowed to say so, the Emperor had almost a craze for marriage and giving in marriage.

Each day news from the seat of war grew more disquieting. The enemy was advancing at all points. The Russians occupied Holland under General Witzingerode, our implacable antagonist during the Russian campaign. The speedy return to Amsterdam of the heir to the House of Orange was talked of; by mere skill Prince Eugene still managed to resist the superior force of Marshal de Bellegarde, whose army had just crossed the Adige; that of Prince Schwartzenberg occupied the confines of Switzerland; the Prussians and the troops of the Confederation had crossed the Rhine at several

points. The Emperor's sole ally was the King of Denmark, the only one who had remained true to him. Yet, overpowered by the hordes of Muscovy, he had at last been forced to conclude an armistice with Russia. In the South, again, all the strategic talent of Marshal Soult might scarcely avail to check the progress of the Duke of Wellington, who was advancing towards our frontier at the head of an army outnumbering that wherewith we could oppose him. I remember hearing several generals blame Napoleon for not having withdrawn all his troops from Spain and brought them back to France. I merely state the fact, without presuming to hazard an opinion upon the subject. Be that as it may, war hemmed us in on all sides, and now, when our ancient landmarks were threatened, small wonder if we yearned for peace.

So, too, did the Emperor; all authorities qualified to speak are agreed on this point. As we know, His Majesty, by means of the Duke de Bassano, wrote a letter in which, adhering to the former bases of the Treaty of Frankfort, he made proposals for a new congress. Mannheim was the place chosen for such a meeting, and thither the Duke of Vicenza was subsequently despatched. In a note of the 2nd of December, the latter once again stated His

Majesty's strict adherence to the bases of the previous treaty. Count Metternich replied to this note on the 10th, saying that the Sovereigns would inform their allies of His Majesty's adhesion. All these negotiations were protracted for a long time by the allies, who finally declared at Frankfort that they would not lay down their arms. Dating from the 20th of December, they loudly proclaimed their intention of invading France, *viâ* Switzerland, whose neutrality had been formally recognised. At the epoch of which I speak, my position served to keep me, I confess, in perfect ignorance of all such matters, but, on learning these later, they recalled certain things to my mind which have strongly helped to convince me of their truth. Everyone, I hope, will admit that if the Emperor wanted war, it is not to me that he would have cared to express his desire for peace, as he often used to do, nor is this incompatible with his reply to the Prince de Neufchâtel, in which he attributed the need for war to the falseness of his enemies.

Napoleon's immense renown and glory have nothing to lose or to gain by my testimony, I know; yet, like anyone else, I may be permitted in my humble way to contribute to a perfect knowledge of the truth.

I have already stated that at the time of his passing through Mayence the Emperor had convoked the Legislative Body for the 2nd of December. By a new decree, this was prorogued to the 19th, and the ceremony was marked by sundry unusual innovations. I remember that it was awaited with special interest, for all Paris was eager to read the Emperor's speech and to know what he would say as to the situation of France. Alas! we little thought that this was the last time that such a ceremony should be observed!

When the members of the Senate and the State Council had respectively taken their places, the Empress arrived. She occupied a private box, being accompanied by her suite. A quarter of an hour afterwards the Emperor made his appearance. When the new President, the Duke de Massa, had sworn the customary oath, His Majesty made the following speech:

"*Senators, Councillors of State and Deputies!*

"Brilliant victories have brought lustre to the French arms during this campaign. Desertions of an unparalleled kind have made such victories useless. Everything has gone against us. France, even, will be endangered unless she can count upon the energy and the unity of her sons.

"In grave circumstances such as these my first impulse has been to summon you together. My heart needs the presence and the affection of my subjects.

"Prosperity has never led me astray; adversity shall find me beyond the reach of her assaults.

"Several times to nations that had lost all I gave peace. With part of my conquests I built up thrones for kings who have forsaken me.

"I had conceived and executed grand schemes for the welfare of the world. As monarch and father, I feel how greatly peace makes thrones and hearths secure. Negotiations have been opened with the Allied Powers. I adhered to the preliminary bases which they first proposed. Thus I hoped that before the opening of this session the Congress of Mannheim would have met, but fresh delays, that cannot be attributed to France, have deferred this moment for which the whole world eagerly longs.

"On my part no opposition is offered to the re-establishment of peace. I know and I share the feelings of Frenchmen. Of Frenchmen, I say, for there is not one among them who would wish to have peace at the price of honour.

"It is with regret that I ask this generous nation to make fresh sacrifices, but they are necessary in order to protect her noblest, dearest interests.

"I have been obliged to reinforce my army by numerous levies; only when using all their strength can nations securely treat with one another. An increase in the Budget has been indispensable. What my Minister of Finance will propose to you is in conformity with the financial system which I have established. We will face everything without a loan, which consumes the future, and without paper-money, that greatest enemy of social order.

"I am contented at the feeling shown towards me, under the present circumstances, by my Italian subjects.

"Denmark and Naples have alone remained faithful to my alliance.

"The Republic of the United States of America is carrying on a successful war against England.

"I have recognised the neutrality of the nineteen Swiss cantons.

"*Senators, Councillors of State and Deputies!*

"You are the natural organs of this throne; it is for you to set the example of an energy which our generation must show on behalf of generations to come. Do not let them say of us, 'They sacrificed their country's first interests; they acknowledged laws which for four centuries England vainly strove to impose upon France!'

"My people must never believe that their Emperor's policy shall ever betray the national honour. For my own part, I am confident that Frenchmen will ever show themselves worthy of themselves and of me!"

This speech was greeted with unanimous shouts of "Long live the Emperor!" and when His Majesty returned to the Tuileries he seemed much gratified. He was suffering, however, from a slight headache, which after half an hour's rest passed off. Later on, the Emperor asked me what I had heard. I told him that certain of my acquaintances had said that everyone wanted peace.

"Peace? peace?" cried the Emperor. "Nobody wants it more than I do! Go, my son, go!"

I withdrew, and the Emperor then went to rejoin the Empress.

It was about this time that the Emperor came to a decision with reference to a matter in which I had sought to interest him. From this it will be seen how deeply he respected a marriage that was legitimate, and how great was his dislike of divorced persons. It is necessary, however, that I should go back somewhat before narrating the anecdote which now occurs to me.

In the Russian campaign General Dupont-Derval had been killed in action while fighting valiantly. His widow had repeatedly endeavoured, although without success, to present a petition to the Emperor, setting forth her hard case. Someone advised her to appeal to me. I was grieved to see how unhappy she was, and ventured to submit her petition to the Emperor. His Majesty rarely rejected my appeals of this sort, for I never undertook to plead except in most discreet fashion, and it was my good fortune to obtain for Madame Dupont-Derval a handsome pension. I do not know how it was that the Emperor found out that General Dupont-Derval had been divorced; that he had a daughter by his first marriage, and that the girl and her mother were both living. He also knew that the General's second wife was the widow of a staff officer, by whom she had two daughters. As may be believed, none of these facts had been stated in the petition. But when they came to the knowledge of the Emperor, he did not cancel the pension, but merely altered the name of the recipient. He gave it to the General's first wife, making it revert to her daughter after her death. This lady, however, was rich enough to do without it, while the second Madame Dupont-Derval actually needed it. However, as one is always in a hurry to

tell good news, I had lost no time in letting the lady know of the Emperor's favourable decision. When she knew what had been done she came back, I being as yet ignorant of any change. From what she said I concluded that she was the victim of some misunderstanding. I therefore spoke again to His Majesty. Judge of my surprise when he set all the facts clearly before me, and then added, "My good lad, you let yourself be taken in like a ninny. I promised a pension, and I have given it to General Derval's wife, that is to say, to his *real* wife, to the mother of his daughter." The Emperor, however, was not the least angry with me. I heard afterwards that matters did not stop there, but that further appeals were made. In these, as may well be conceived, I had no share. Nothing more transpired, however, to change the Emperor's decision up to the time of his abdication.

CHAPTER XV

Commissioners for the departments—Enemies on French soil—His Majesty and Ferdinand VII.—The Prince of Spain—Projected marriage—Measures adopted by the Emperor—Dantzig capitulates—Torgau surrenders—Bad news from the South—Instructions to the Duke of Vicenza—Baron Capelle and the commission of enquiry—Remarkable coincidence—The Paris National Guard—The Emperor commander-in-chief—Formation of the staff—Marshal Moncey—The Emperor eager to amalgamate all classes of society—Zeal of M. de Chabrol—M. Allent and M. de Sainte-Croix—The wooden leg—Eagerness of the citizens—Lack of arms—Army pensioners desire to re-enter the service.

In order to neutralise the evil effect produced in the provinces by the reports of members of the Legislative Body, and the letters of alarmists, His Majesty chose certain members of the Conservative party who were to act as commissioners, visiting all the departments and bidding the people take heart. This was surely a wise move, one which circumstances had made imperative, for among the mass of the population discouragement had set in, and one knows how much the presence of leaders revives the spirits of the downcast. The enemy was

advancing at various points; they had already set their foot upon the soil of France. When news of this sort reached the Emperor it deeply distressed him, yet he was not overcome by it. Sometimes, though, his indignation burst forth, but this was generally when French emigrants were reported to have joined the ranks of the enemy. With withering scorn he spoke of them as infamous traitors, as wretches not worthy to be pitied. At the taking of Huningue he contemptuously remarked concerning a M. de Montjoie, who, on joining the Bavarian army, had taken another name, "Well, he at least was ashamed to keep his French name!" Though easily induced to be lenient towards all other offenders, the Emperor showed himself quite without pity for traitors and turncoats who took up arms against their country. How often have I heard him say that in his eyes there was no greater crime than this!

In order not to complicate State interests still further, the Emperor had thought of sending Ferdinand VII. back to Spain. I am also assured that His Majesty made certain overtures on this behalf when last in Paris. But it was the Spanish prince who did not wish to return, and, on the contrary, perpetually begged the Emperor to act as

his support. Above all things he desired to become the Emperor's ally. Everyone is aware, too, how in his letters he besought Napoleon to find him a wife. The Emperor seriously thought of marrying him to the eldest daughter of King Joseph, which seemed a conciliatory method of settling the claims of King Joseph and Ferdinand. King Joseph was only too glad to accede to this arrangement, and from the way in which he had enjoyed his term of sovereignty one might assume that His Majesty set small store by a crown. Prince Ferdinand had acquiesced in this alliance, which seemed thoroughly to suit him, but suddenly, towards the close of 1813, he asked for time, and subsequently backed out of it. At last he left Valençay, at a later date though than the Emperor had authorised him to do. After all, his presence was merely one more embarrassment, yet the Emperor had no cause to complain of his conduct until after the events of Fontainebleau.

The main thing, however, was to defend the soil of France from the enemy, who had already invaded it at several points. That was His Majesty's first thought. And yet he found time to busy himself with lesser matters, among others with the reorganisation of the National Guard. Work of this sort made Napoleon's presence in Paris a

necessity, and he stayed there until the 25th of January. During those five-and-twenty days what dire news came to hand!

First of all, the Emperor learnt that the Russians, as unscrupulous as the Austrians in their non-maintenance of the conditions usually held sacred when a town capitulates, had trodden the Dantzig treaty underfoot. In the name of the Czar the Prince of Würtemberg had guaranteed to General Rapp and his forces the right of returning unmolested to France. These conditions, like those made by Prince Schwartzenberg with Marshal Saint-Cyr, were totally disregarded, and the Dantzig garrison was taken prisoner in the same treacherous way as that of Dresden had been captured. This news, which came simultaneously with that of the surrender of Torgau, served to grieve His Majesty all the more, because it was additional proof that the allies were merely making peace negotiations a pretext, being determined each time to evade arriving at any definite decision.

News of an alarming nature reached us also from Lyons. The command of the troops there had been entrusted to Marshal Augereau, and he was accused of a want of energy in checking the invasion of Southern France.

I will now endeavour to jot down sundry events which occurred during the last days spent by His Majesty in Paris. On January 4th, though scarcely sanguine as to the result, the Emperor gave certain instructions to the Duke of Vicenza and despatched him to the enemy's headquarters. He had to wait a long while for his passports. At the same time special orders were sent to the prefects of departments whose territory was invaded, telling them how to act under such trying circumstances. A commission of enquiry was formed to investigate the conduct of Baron Capelle, Prefect of the Department of Leman, on the occasion of the entry of the enemy into Geneva. Finally, a decree was issued mobilising a hundred and twenty battalions of the Imperial National Guard, and calling all the departments of the east under arms. These were excellent measures, no doubt, but precautions that proved vain, since Destiny was stronger than a great man's genius!

Meanwhile, on January 3rd, the decree appeared calling out thirty thousand men of the Paris National Guard, on the very day that, by a sinister coincidence, the King of Naples signed a treaty of alliance with Great Britain. The Emperor reserved for himself the command of the Paris National Guard, and

nominated other officers to the several posts with infallible tact and foresight.

It was his pleasure that other appointments should be under the control of the Prefect of the Seine, M. de Chabrol, who showed herein the utmost zeal and activity. In a short time the National Guard presented an imposing appearance. The officer who really formed the life and soul of the whole corps was the Chevalier Allent, who was afterwards attached to the staff of King Joseph, and conducted all the negotiations between the Emperor's lieutenant-general and Marshal Moncey. How slowly the good Marshal used to write! While he was dawdling over the signature of one letter, writing out in full "Marshal Duke of Conegliano," Allent, his secretary, had time to get through three or four more.

The two auditors of the State Council had hardly anything to do, but it must not be inferred therefrom that they were persons of no account. To obtain such an appointment it was a primary condition that every candidate should prove that he possessed an income of at least six thousand francs. The chief auditor was M. Ducancel, his colleague being M. Robert de Sainte-Croix. The latter had had his leg broken by a shell in the Moscow campaign,

and the brave young captain of cavalry managed to ride astride a cannon all the way from Beresina to Wilna. After his leg had been amputated, he relinquished the sword for the pen; and thus it was that he became auditor of the State Council.

Eight days after the mobilisation of the Paris National Guard, the chiefs of the twelve legions and of the staff were formally invited to take the oath of allegiance. All had been thoroughly organised, but the need of arms was greatly felt. Many townsfolk could only obtain lances instead of rifles. Yet the National Guard was able to muster its full strength of thirty thousand men, and soon occupied the various parts of the capital, while other citizens, some of them old soldiers, came forward to fight once again for France. Hundreds of army pensioners, oblivious of past hardships, with scarred, weather-beaten faces turned eagerly to meet the foe. Yet of those, alas! who now quitted the Invalides, but few returned!

The moment now approached for the Emperor to depart. Before leaving, he took a touching farewell of the National Guard, as we shall presently see, and entrusted the Empress with the regency, as he had done before during the Dresden campaign. This time the way to the front was only too short!

CHAPTER XVI

The campaign of miracles—A solemn promise broken—Violation of Swiss territory—The allies at Brisgau—Bâle bridge—French towns occupied by the enemy—The Emperor's energy—The Governor of Antwerp—The King of Naples deserts—Napoleon's anger—The eve of departure—The officers of the National Guard at the Tuileries—The Emperor's leave-taking—The Empress in tears—M. de Bourrienne at the palace—Colonel Bouland—A strange encounter—The old curé—We reach Brienne—Blücher runs away—He is thought to be a prisoner—Atrocious cruelty of the enemy—Rapes, thefts and incendiarism—Official lies—The Czar's callousness—La Rothière—Retreat on Troyes—The Emperor in imminent danger—The war of the Eagle and the Crows—Blücher's army.

We were soon to see the commencement of the campaign of miracles. But before speaking of the things which I myself witnessed during this campaign, I ought to set down certain facts by way of an introduction. The Swiss cantons had solemnly promised the Emperor that their territory should be preserved inviolate, and that they would do everything to oppose the passage of the allied armies, which were advancing towards the French

frontier through Brisgau. In order to check them the Emperor counted on the destruction of Bâle bridge. This, however, was not effected, while Switzerland, instead of maintaining her promised neutrality, joined issue against France. The allied armies crossed the Rhine at Bâle, Schaffhausen and Mannheim. Geneva opened her gates to the foe. During the month of January, Vesoul, Epinal, Nancy, Langres, Dijon, Châlons-sur-Saone and Bar-sur-Aube were occupied by the allies.

As the danger grew ever more imminent, the Emperor only redoubled his marvellous energies. He urged the immediate organisation of fresh levies, and, to meet expenses, himself contributed thirty millions from the secret treasury which he possessed in the cellars of the Pavillon Marsan. But to get recruits was no easy matter. In the course of that one year (1813), *one million and forty thousand* soldiers had been called to fight beneath the banners of France. She proved unable to furnish further sacrifices, though veterans everywhere hastened to join the ranks. General Carnot offered his services to the Emperor, who was greatly touched at such chivalry, and entrusted him with the defence of Antwerp. How courageously the General acquitted himself of this important task is now a matter of

history. The departments in Eastern France were all in course of mobilisation, while several wealthy landowners were busy organising corps of volunteers and of mounted yeomanry.

Just at this time the Emperor received a terrible piece of news. The King of Naples had just joined issue with the enemies of France. Napoleon's anger at the Crown Prince of Sweden's baseness will be remembered, and yet for this treachery there was some excuse. The Prince was isolated, hemmed in by hostile powers with whom he was incapable to cope, albeit the interests of his newly-adopted country were inseparable from those of France. By refusing to join the coalition he would have drawn upon Sweden the wrath of his redoubtable neighbours, and would have lost throne and people. Again, he did not owe his position to the Emperor. With King Joachim it was very different. Napoleon had made him what he was, had given him one of his sisters to wife, had placed him on a throne, and treated him better than a brother. The King of Naples was thus in duty bound to make the cause of France his own; indeed, it was to his own interest to do so. The fall of the Emperor meant ruin to all his Royal relatives. If he were not there to prop them up, how should they stand? This

was well understood by Joseph, by Jerome, by brave, loyal Prince Eugene. In Italy, the last-named courageously defended his adopted father's interests. If the King of Naples had joined him, they could have both marched on Vienna, and this bold yet perfectly feasible manœuvre would infallibly have rescued France.

When first His Majesty heard of the King of Naples' desertion he exclaimed, "What? Murat has played me false? Murat has sold himself to the English? Miserable man! He thinks that if they succeed in overthrowing me, they will let him keep the throne upon which I first placed him. Poor fool! It will be worse for him if his treachery succeeds. He may look for less pity from his new allies than from myself."

On the eve of his departure for the front the Emperor received the officers of the Paris National Guard in the grand hall of the Tuileries. It was an imposing, mournful ceremony. The Emperor entered, accompanied by the Empress, leading the little King of Rome. Although the Emperor's speech on this occasion is well known, I reproduce it here, not wishing to leave out of these Memoirs my old master's beautiful and solemn words.

"*Gentlemen and officers of the National Guard!*

"It is a pleasure to me to see you assembled here. I leave to-night to assume the leadership of the army. On quitting the capital I trustfully place under your care my wife and son, for whom such high hopes are cherished. This sign of confidence is your due in exchange for all those that throughout my life you have ever shown me. I shall start without any sense of uneasiness now that my loved ones are in your trusty keeping. After France, it is they who are to me most dear. To your care I commit them.

"It may chance that, owing to the tactics I am about to adopt, the enemy will seize an opportunity of approaching your walls. Should such a thing occur, remember that it can only be a matter of a few days, and that I will soon come to your help. I counsel you to remain united, and to resist all attempts to promote discord among you. No doubt some will try to shake your steadfast devotion to duty, but I count upon your being proof against such perfidy."

At the close of this speech the Emperor fixed his gaze upon the Empress and the King of Rome, and, pointing to his little son, he added, "I leave him in your care, in the loving care of my loyal

city of Paris!" At these words a thousand arms were raised, and a thousand voices loudly swore to protect so precious a charge. The Empress, bathed in tears and pale with emotion, would have fallen if the Emperor had not given her his support. Here enthusiasm touched its topmost pitch; tears were in the eyes of all; not one of all that company but felt that he would willingly give his life-blood for the Imperial family. It was on that day that I first saw M. de Bourrienne at the palace; if I remember rightly, he wore the uniform of a captain of the National Guard.

On the 25th of January the Emperor left for the front, after appointing the Empress regent. We slept that night at Châlons-sur-Marne. His arrival checked both the enemy's advance and our retreat. The following day he in his turn attacked the allies at Saint-Dizier. The entry of His Majesty into this city was the signal for immense enthusiasm. Directly the Emperor alighted an ex-colonel named Bouland, almost a septuagenarian, flung himself at His Majesty's feet, protesting his grief at seeing the foe on the soil of France, and expressing his confidence that the Emperor would speedily clear the country of the invader. Raising up the worthy veteran, Napoleon gaily remarked that he would

spare nothing to bring about so desirable a consummation. At Saint-Dizier the allies behaved in truly barbarous fashion, treating old men and women with such cruelty that they died from the effects. The presence of His Majesty made everyone rejoice.

After this repulse of the allies at Saint-Dizier, the Emperor learnt that the army of Silesia was being concentrated at Brienne. He at once marched forward through the Déo forest. His brave troops seemed as indefatigable as he was himself. At Eclaron a halt was made, where the Emperor gave a sum of money to help the inhabitants to rebuild their church, which had been destroyed by the enemy. The local doctor came forward to thank the Emperor for his benevolence. His Majesty looked hard at him, and then said:

"You've been in the service, sir, have you not?"

"Yes, Sire, I was with the army in Egypt."

"Why have you not got the Cross?"

"Because, Sire, I never asked for it."

"You deserve to have it all the more, then. I hope you will wear the one that I am going to give you now."[1]

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1 The Emperor was very chary in bestowing the Cross of Honour, as the following fact proves. He was highly

In a few moments his brevet was signed and delivered to the new Chevalier, whom Napoleon enjoined to show the greatest care to those of our sick and wounded who might need his services.

On entering Mézières His Majesty was received by the authorities of the town, the clergy, and the National Guard. "Sirs," said the Emperor to the soldiers who thronged about him, "we are fighting to-day for our hearths; see to it that we protect these, and that the Cossacks do not come and warm their hands at them. They are bad guests, who won't leave you any house room. Show them, then, that every Frenchman is born a soldier, and a good soldier, too."

When the curé came to present his respects, His Majesty noticed that the worthy cleric watched him with interest, and, looking closer in his turn, he recognised the prelate as one of his old masters at the Brienne college.

"Why, my dear master, is it you?" cried the Emperor. "So you never left the district! All the

satisfied with the services of the Inspector-General of Police, M. Veyrat, and the latter hoped to obtain the Cross. I presented several petitions on his behalf to His Majesty, who one day said to me, "I am pleased with Veyrat; he serves me well; I am willing to give him as much money as he wants; *but the Cross—never!*"

better; you could not have served the fatherland more nobly. I need scarcely ask if you know the country."

"Sire," said the curé, "I could find my way about if blindfold."

"Then come along with us; you shall be our guide, and we'll have a chat."

Forthwith the good priest saddled his mare and took his place among the members of the Imperial staff.

The same day we arrived before Brienne. The Emperor's march had been so swift, so secret, that the Prussians heard nothing of it until we were right on them. Some of the commanding officers were taken prisoner, and Blücher himself, who was tranquilly leaving his residence, had only just time to take to his heels and bolt before the bullets of our advance guard. For a moment the Emperor thought that the Prussian commander had been caught, and exclaimed, "We'll get hold of the old fellow; the campaign won't last long, then."

The Russians still left in the town set fire to it, and the fight was yet in progress when night fell. In twelve hours' time the place was captured after a desperate struggle. The Emperor was furious that Blücher had escaped him.

On getting back to his headquarters at Mézières, His Majesty just missed being struck by a Cossack's lance; but the would-be assailant was killed in the very nick of time by a pistol-shot fired by Colonel Gourgaud.

The Emperor had only 15,000 men, and they had fought successfully against 80,000 of the enemy. When the battle was over, the Prussians retreated upon Bar-sur-Aube, and His Majesty took up his quarters at the château of Brienne, where he spent two nights. How different was our stay here ten years ago, when the Emperor was on his way to Milan to assume the title of King of Italy!

At every step, indeed, we found horrible traces of the enemy's passage. After capturing towns and villages, they took the inhabitants prisoner, and maltreated these in shameful fashion, striking them with their sabres and the butt end of their guns, stripping some naked and making others act as their guides. If these last displeased them, they forthwith hacked them to pieces. Everywhere they claimed an unlimited supply of victuals and provender, and when the wretched peasants had parted with their all, the ravenous interlopers burned their farms and cottages by way of recompense. The Prussians and above all the Cossacks distinguished themselves by their

brutal ferocity. Anon these hideous savages would break into houses, lay hands on everything, load their horses with plunder, and destroy anything that they could not steal. Or else, if they found nothing to glut their greed, they would smash doors, ceilings, windows, furniture, everything, and then make of the fragments that remained a huge bonfire. Driven by such diabolical deeds to abandon their humble homes, the wretched townsfolk were forced to find refuge in the adjacent woods.

The wealthier inhabitants, however, gave them all that they asked for, including brandy, which they greedily drank. Then these barbarians, inflamed by fiery liquor, gave rein to their lascivious appetites. They seized the girls, the women, the serving-maids, obliged them to drink brandy, too, and when the poor females were in a half-fainting, half-senseless state, these brawny satyrs fell upon them and compelled them to minister to their unspeakable lust. Not a few of the women had courage and strength enough to resist, but they were eventually overpowered by four or five miscreants, stripped stark naked upon the floor and forcibly deflowered. To rape succeeded murder and mutilation. The gashed and bloody corpses were then hurled like huge red steaks upon the glowing embers of the camp-fire. Rich home-

steads were reduced in a trice to ashes, and their inmates to beggary. Husbands or grandfathers who strove to save their wives and children from dishonour were promptly butchered. If a mother approached the bivouac-fire to seek warmth for the shivering infant at her breast, the Cossacks flung gunpowder into the blaze, when the anguishing screams of the victim were drowned by their fiendish laughter.

It would take me far too long to narrate all the hideous deeds of bloodshed committed by these barbarous hordes. At the time of the Restoration it became the fashion to say that the reports of such atrocities were grossly exaggerated, either through hatred or through fear. I have even heard some who thought it amusing to crack jokes about the Cossacks' courteous acts. But these humorists were careful to keep at a good long distance from the seat of war, while they lived in departments which suffered nothing by the first or the second invasion. I should have thought that such witticisms would not have had much effect upon the unfortunate people of Champagne and the departments of the east. It has been asserted, too, that the allied Sovereigns and the Russian and Prussian commanders strenuously forbade the troops under them to commit any acts of violence, and that these were solely

attributable to the lawless, undisciplined Cossacks. I was in a position, particularly at Troyes, to furnish numerous proofs to the contrary. This town will surely not have forgotten how the Princes of Würtemberg and Hohenlohe, and the Emperor Alexander himself, meted out justice to the ravishers, murderers and incendiaries who committed hideous crimes under their very eyes, the miscreants being not Cossacks alone, but also disciplined soldiers of the line. No steps were taken, either by the Sovereigns or their officers, to repress such brutality; and yet, when they quitted the town, it needed but an order from them to disperse in a moment the hordes of Cossacks who were devastating the country.

The field of La Rothière had formerly been the rallying-point of the pupils of the Brienne military school. It was there that the Emperor as a lad had made such schoolboy contests the prelude to his subsequent gigantic battles. That of La Rothière was of the most deadly description, and it was at heavy cost that the enemy was able to purchase the advantage mainly due to its immense superiority in numbers. During the night after this unequal conflict the Emperor ordered the retreat on Troyes.

On returning to the château after the battle His Majesty was again exposed to imminent danger.

He found himself suddenly surrounded by a troop of Uhlans, and drew his sword in self-defence. The equerry, young M. Jardin, was shot through the arm. Several chasseurs forming the escort were wounded, but they at last managed to rescue His Majesty. I am in a position to assert that in all skirmishes of this sort the Emperor showed the greatest coolness. That day, as I was unbuckling his sword-belt, he half drew the weapon from its sheath and said to me, "Do you know, Constant, those rascals actually made me draw my sword! What impudence of them, eh? They want a good lesson to teach them how to keep at a respectful distance."

It is not my intention to give a detailed history of this campaign in France, throughout which the Emperor displayed stupendous energy, and which won him the admiration of all his companions. Unfortunately the advantages which one by one he gained reduced his forces considerably, while the loss inflicted upon the enemy was one that could be easily repaired. As M. de Bourrienne has well said, it was an eagle fighting with crows. "The eagle can kill hundreds; each blow of its beak means the death of an enemy; but the crows come back in greater numbers; they press round the eagle, until at last they suffocate him."

At Champ-Aubert, Montmirail, Nangis, Montereau, Arcis, and a score of other engagements, the Emperor had the advantage of genius, while his army had that of pluck. All, however, proved vain. Scarcely had the masses of the enemy been swept aside than our men were confronted by fresh ones, while we were exhausted by forced marches and perpetual fighting. Blücher's army in particular seemed ever to transform itself into a new one. Continually beaten, it came on again with forces equal, if not superior, to those we had dispersed or destroyed. How was it possible perpetually to resist numbers so overwhelming as were these?

CHAPTER XVII

The Emperor repeats his Italian triumphs—His personal courage —His speech to the men—A shell bursts close to him—His broken rest—His kindliness towards myself—No peace with dishonour—I sleep in the Emperor's armchair—His Majesty avoids waking me—He is determined to make peace—The Emperor and the Duke de Bassano—Departure for Sézanne —The captive generals—Battle of Nangis—Blücher nearly made prisoner—The eve of the battle of Méry—We move towards Anglure—Méry on fire—Critical position of the allies and of M. Ansart—The Emperor's guide—How the bridge was built—The Emperor dying of thirst—His squalid headquarters—Prisoners and colours despatched to Paris—Delicate mission of M. de Saint-Aignan—He is disgraced —Troyes capitulates—A rigorous decree—Execution of the Chevalier de Gonault.

NEVER had the Emperor commanded greater admiration than now, during this disastrous campaign, when fighting against Fate he repeated all the prodigious triumphs of his early campaigns in Italy. At the outset of his career his policy was one of attack; its close was marked by a system of defence the finest to be found in all the annals of war. One may say that in every place, at every moment, His Majesty combined the *rôle* of general

and of private soldier. He ever set the example of personal courage, occasionally to the alarm of all his suite, whose very lives were linked to his own. At Montereau, for instance, the Emperor stood to the guns, serving the vent himself, merrily facing the enemy's fire, and saying to the soldiers that begged him to be careful, "It's all right, my good fellows; the bullet that is to kill me has not yet been moulded."

At Arcis, again, the Emperor fought like a private soldier, and repeatedly used his sabre to free himself from the enemy that closed round him. A shell fell a few feet from his horse. The animal was startled, and shied, almost unseating the Emperor, who drove the spur into its flanks, and forced it to approach the bombshell. Just at that moment this burst, but by a marvellous chance neither horse nor rider was touched. Repeatedly the Emperor seemed to set his own life at nought, and yet it was only when reduced to the very last extremity that he would renounce all hope of saving his throne. But to treat with the enemy proved for him a costly undertaking so long as the latter occupied French territory. His Majesty would fain have purged the soil of France from these foreigners before he deigned to come to terms with them.

Hence all this hesitancy on his part, all these refusals to sign the peace that had been so frequently proposed to him.

On the 8th of February, after a long discussion with two or three of his intimate councillors, the Emperor retired to rest at a late hour, looking greatly preoccupied. He often woke me in the night, complained of not being able to sleep, and made me take away and bring back his candle several times. About five a.m. he called me again. I was sinking with exhaustion. The Emperor saw this, and said kindly, "My poor Constant, you're quite worn out. We're having a rough time of it, eh? But cheer up! You shall soon have a good rest."

Encouraged by this kind speech, I took the liberty of telling him that no one ought to complain of fatigue or of privations since His Majesty shared these; yet, said I, everyone was wishing and hoping for peace.

"Well, well," replied the Emperor, in a tone of suppressed excitement, "they shall have peace, too; they shall see what peace with dishonour is like!"

I was silent. His Majesty's agitation distressed me deeply, and for the moment I longed for the Emperor to have at his command an army com-

posed of men of iron like himself. He would not have signed a peace treaty then, except on the frontier of France.

The familiar, kindly tone with which the Emperor spoke to me on this occasion reminds me of another circumstance which I omitted to note. Roustan was a witness of this, and it was from his lips that I heard the first part of the story.

In one of the campaigns beyond the Rhine, I do not know which, I had been up for some nights, and was dreadfully tired. The Emperor went out about eleven, and remained away three or four hours. I sat down in the armchair near his writing-table to wait for him, and was so tired that I fell fast asleep, my head resting on my hands. When the Emperor came in with Roustan and Marshal Berthier, I heard nothing. Prince de Neufchâtel was going to rouse me, and make me get out of His Majesty's chair, but the Emperor prevented him, saying, "Let the poor fellow sleep; he's been up for ever so many nights." Then, as there was no other chair in the room, the Emperor sat down on the edge of his bed, bidding the Marshal follow his example. He chatted with him for a long time, while I continued to sleep. But as he wanted one of the maps on which my

elbows were resting, His Majesty tried to pull it gently away. Though he did this as carefully as possible, he woke me, and I at once got up in great confusion and with profound apologies.

"*Monsieur* Constant," said the Emperor with a kindly smile, "I am so sorry I disturbed you; pray excuse me." Such was Napoleon's consideration for his servants. I trust that this and similar incidents already chronicled may serve to confute the charges made against him of harshness towards inferiors.

I will now resume my account of the events of 1814. During the night of the 8th inst., as the Emperor seemed disposed to make peace, the night was spent in preparing despatches, and next day at nine a.m. they were brought to His Majesty to be signed. But by that time he had changed his mind. At seven o'clock he had received news about the Russian and Prussian forces. When the Duke de Bassano came in with the said despatches His Majesty was poring over maps, into which he was sticking pins.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he said. "I've given up all idea of that now. Look, I am just giving Blücher a beating. He has taken the route to Montmirail. I shall start. I'll beat him to-morrow, and the day after as well. Things are changing,

you'll see. Don't let us do anything in a hurry; there will always be time to sign a peace treaty such as they propose."

An hour later we were on the march to Sézanne.

For several days after this the Emperor and his brave soldiers won brilliant successes. Hardly had our troops reached Champ-Aubert than they had to face the Russians, which they had already encountered at Brienne. Without waiting to rest we fell upon them, cut them off from the Prussian army, and took their commander and some of his staff officers prisoner.

His Majesty, who ever showed himself courteous and generous towards his conquered foes, asked them to dine at his own table and treated them with the utmost consideration. The enemy were again defeated at Ferme-des-Frénaux by Marshals Ney and Mortier; as well as at Vaux-Champs, where Blücher was very nearly taken prisoner. At Nangis the Emperor dispersed 150,000 men under the command of Prince Schwartzenberg, sending in their pursuit Marshals Oudinot, Kellermann and Macdonald, with Generals Treilhard and Gerard.

On the eve of the battle of Méry the Emperor rode through all the suburbs of this little town, and fixed his discerning eye upon a vast tract of marshy

land in the centre of which is the village of Bagneux, Anglure, where the Aube passes, being close by. After a rapid survey of this dangerous soil, he came back and sat down on a log, leaning back against a gamekeeper's hut. Here he unfolded his map, and after studying this for a time, he got into the saddle again and rode off at a gallop.

Just then a covey of teal and snipe rose in front of him, when he laughingly exclaimed, "Fly away my pretties, fly away, and make room for other game!" Then, turning to those with him he added: "This time we've got them!"

The Emperor galloped towards Anglure to see if the mound at Baudement was held by the artillery. But just then the sound of firing was heard at Méry, which obliged him to retrace his steps. As he returned to Méry he said to his officers, "We must gallop, gentlemen, for the enemy are in a hurry and we ought not to keep them waiting." Half an hour afterwards he had reached the battle-field.

The burning buildings at Méry enveloped the enemy in dense columns of smoke, and hid from them the movements of the French troops. The Emperor's plan, conceived that morning on the Bagneux marshes, seemed just about to be success-

ful, and all was going well. His Majesty foresaw the defeat of the allies and the saving of France, while at Anglure all was in a state of desolation. The inhabitants of several villages were terror-struck at the approach of the enemy, and not a single gun was there to cut off their retreat, nor a single soldier to prevent their crossing the river.

The position of the allies was so critical that the whole French army believed them to be lost, for with all their artillery they were stuck in the bog while exposed to a withering fire from our guns. There, too, they would have remained. Suddenly they made fresh efforts to get into line and cross the Aube. The Emperor, who could not pursue them without placing his men in a like predicament in the marshes, sought to check the soldiers' impetuousness, believing that the rising ground at Baudement was covered with artillery ready to annihilate the enemy. Not hearing the report of a single gun in that quarter, he hastened to Sézanne to move his troops forward at full speed, but those he hoped to find there had already been sent on in the direction of Fère Champenoise.

In this interval, a landowner at Anglure named Ansart had ridden post-haste to Sézanne to tell the marshal in command that the enemy pursued

by the Emperor was about to cross the Aube. On reaching the marshal, who seemed in no hurry to move his men, the messenger urged him to do so. But no orders had been received from the Emperor to do such a thing. The new-comer was arrested as a spy and narrowly escaped being shot.

While all this was going on the Emperor got to Sézanne. Surrounded by several inhabitants of the town, he asked for someone to show him the way to Fère Champenoise. A bailiff offered his service. The Emperor, accompanied by his staff, at once started, and said to his new guide, "Ride ahead of me, sir, and take the shortest way." On nearing the battlefield at Fère Champenoise, the Emperor noticed that every time the cannon fired the poor bailiff ducked his head.

"Are you frightened?" asked the Emperor.

"No, Sire."

"Then why do you duck your head?"

"Because I am not used, as is Your Majesty, to all this noise."

"You must be used to everything. Go ahead, and don't be afraid."

But the guide, more dead than alive, reined in his horse and trembled in every limb. "Come, come," cried the Emperor, "I can see that you are

really scared, so ride behind me." He obeyed, but turned his horse's head about and galloped back to Sézanne as hard as he could, vowing that he would never offer to be the Emperor's guide again on an occasion such as this.

At the battle of Méry the Emperor, in the very teeth of the enemy, had a little bridge built across the adjacent river. This was constructed in an hour with ladders lashed together and held up by logs of wood. But this was not strong enough, and to make it serviceable planks had to be laid across it as well, and these were what could not be procured at the moment. The Emperor caused the shutters of several large houses near the river to be taken off and nailed across as a flooring for the bridge. While engaged in this work His Majesty became dreadfully thirsty, and was about to scoop up some of the water from the river with the palm of his hand, when a girl ran out of a neighbouring house and brought him a glass of wine and water, which he drank with avidity.

Astonished at seeing a girl in so perilous a position, the Emperor laughingly said to her, "You'd make a brave soldier, mademoiselle. Would you like to have the epaulettes? You shall be one of my aides-de-camp."

The girl blushed, curtsied to the Emperor, and was about to go back, when he held out his hand, which she kissed.

"Later on," added His Majesty, "you must come to Paris and remind me of the service you have done me to-day. You shall not have cause to complain of my ingratitude."

The girl thanked the Emperor, and went away delighted.

After the battle of Nangis an Austrian officer came at night-time to headquarters and had a lengthy private interview with His Majesty. Forty-eight hours afterwards, in consequence of the engagement at Méry, another envoy from Prince Schwartzenberg appeared with an answer from the Emperor of Austria in reply to Napoleon's confidential letter despatched two days previously. We had left Méry, which was in flames, and the only shelter to be found at Châtres for the Emperor was in a coal-shed. Here he spent the night, either working or lying fully dressed upon his bed, for sleep he could not. Here, too, he received the Austrian envoy, Prince Lichtenstein. Nothing transpired of their long interview, but everyone believed that it had reference to peace. After the Prince's departure the Emperor was unusually merry. Some

of his former confidence seemed to have come back, but it was only momentary.

Prince Lichtenstein had scarcely left head-quarters when I saw M. de Saint-Aignan (brother-in-law of the Duke of Vicenza and equerry to the Emperor) arrive. He came back from Paris to say that there was disaffection and murmuring in the capital, where everyone desired that Napoleon should seize the first opportunity of making peace. Of course I am ignorant of what actually occurred at this interview, for the door was closed and M. de Saint-Aignan spoke in a low voice. But it is certain that his information, and his candid method of imparting it, roused His Majesty's ire to the utmost pitch. When M. de Saint-Aignan had gone, the Emperor called me, and on going into the room I found him looking pale and agitated. A few hours afterwards, when the Emperor asked for his horse, M. de Saint-Aignan, as equerry-in-waiting, approached to hold His Majesty's stirrup, but directly Napoleon noticed him he gave him a furious look and motioned him to retire, while he shouted out "Mesgrigny!" This was a summons for Baron de Mesgrigny, another equerry, who at once took M. de Saint-Aignan's place. The latter retired to the rear of the army until the storm had blown over. In a few

days he was restored to favour, at which all were glad, for his amiable qualities made him beloved by all.

From Châtres the Emperor marched upon Troyes. The enemy, who occupied this town, at first seemed disposed to defend it, but they soon gave in, and after formal capitulation withdrew. During the short while the allies had been in Troyes, the Royalists had publicly declared their hatred of the Emperor and their devotion to foreign powers, who, so they said, were come at the right moment to place the Bourbons on the throne. They themselves were foolish enough to hoist the white flag and wear the white cockade. The allies protected these persons; towards others, however, who were of a contrary opinion, they showed themselves exacting and harsh.

Unfortunately for the Royalists they were in a feeble minority, and the favour shown to them by the Prussians and Russians made them as much loathed by the bulk of the down-trodden population as were the invaders themselves. Already before the Emperor's entry into Troyes certain Royalist proclamations had fallen into his hands. These were addressed to officers of his household, or of the army. He had shown no anger at these, but

such persons as had received manifestoes were requested to destroy them, and mention nothing as to their contents. On reaching Troyes His Majesty issued a decree condemning to death all Frenchmen in the service of the enemy, and those besides who wore Royalist badges and decorations. The Chevalier Gonault, an unfortunate *emigré*, was tried by court-martial and convicted of having worn the Cross of Saint-Louis and the white cockade while the allies were at Troyes. He was also charged with having furnished the enemy's generals with all the information he could possibly give. The court-martial sentenced him to death, for the facts were indisputable and the law inexorable. He accordingly suffered the extreme penalty.

CHAPTER XVIII

Negotiations for an armistice—Blücher and his men—Prince Schwartzenberg resumes the offensive—The Emperor ahead of Blücher—Halt at Herbisse—The good Curé—Strange lodging for the night—Marshal Lefebvre as theologian—Battle of Craonne—M. de Bussy—Brave Wolff and the Cross of Honour—Several generals are wounded—General Drouot's skill—Defence of the Russians—M. de Rumigny at headquarters—A secret conference—Small hopes of peace—Violent scene between the Emperor and the Duke of Vicenza—"You are a Russian!"—The Emperor's vehement language—A victory in prospect—March upon Laon—The French army surprised by the Russians—The Emperor's vexation—Rheims is taken—General Corbineau's bravery—The Russians quit Rheims—The inhabitants are resigned—Three days at Rheims—The young conscripts—General Janssens—The affairs of the Empire—The one man who is indefatigable.

AFTER the brilliant advantages gained by the Emperor in the space of a few days, and with forces so singularly inferior in number to the masses of the enemy, and being aware how greatly his men were in need of rest, His Majesty decided to let his troops remain for a few days at Troyes, while he entered into negotiations for an armistice

with Prince Schwartzenberg. At this juncture news reached the Emperor that General Blücher, who had been wounded at Méry, was moving along the bank of the Marne at the head of an army of one hundred thousand fresh troops. He was said to be marching on Meaux. On hearing of this movement on Blücher's part, Prince Schwartzenberg cut all negotiations short, and at once resumed the offensive at Bar-sur-Seine. The Emperor, whose genius rapidly and instinctively divined the enemy's tactics, as he could not be in both places at once, resolved to go and fight Blücher in person while making Schwartzenberg believe, by means of a stratagem, that he was ready to go into action. Two army corps, one commanded by Marshal Oudinot and the other by Marshal Macdonald, were therefore sent to encounter the Austrians.

As soon as they got within range of the enemy the troops uttered ringing cheers, which usually was a sign of His Majesty's presence in their midst. Meanwhile we hurried forward to meet Blücher.

We halted at the little village of Herbisse, where we spent the night at the presbytery. The curé, seeing the Emperor arrive with his staff of marshals, aides-de-camp and orderly officers, nearly lost his head.

On alighting His Majesty said, "We have come to claim your hospitality for one night. Do not be frightened at our visit; we will try and make ourselves as small as possible so as not to incommode you."

Then the Emperor, conducted by the worthy cleric, who was overwhelmed alike by bashfulness and anxiety to please, took up his quarters in the sole apartment which for our host served as dining-room, bedroom, study, drawing-room and kitchen. In an instant His Majesty was surrounded by his maps and papers, and he proceeded to work as easily and composedly as if he had been in his study at the Tuileries. But the members of his suite needed a little more time than this to get established. It was no easy thing for so many people to find room in a bakehouse, for the place was really little more than this. However, the members of the Imperial suite, which included a prince of the realm, were not fastidious, but showed every wish to adapt themselves to circumstances.

It was a notable thing, and illustrative of the French character, to see the good temper displayed by these brave fellows despite their daily combats and the increasingly alarming turn of events. The younger officers formed a group round the clergy-

man's niece, who sang rustic ballads to them. Marshal Lefebvre after a while engaged the curé in a theological controversy. He had been brought up for the priesthood when a lad, and now averred that all that he had retained of his former vocation was the method of doing his hair, "because this proved the quickest." The good Marshal interlarded his remarks with Latin quotations, much to the merriment of his hearers, including the curé, who said to him:

"Monseigneur, if you had continued your studies for the Church you would at the very least have been made cardinal."

"Why not?" observed one of the officers. "If the Abbé Maury had been a sergeant-major in '89, to-day, perhaps, he would be a marshal of France."

"Or else dead," added the Duke de Dantzig, using a somewhat forcible expletive. "So much the better for him; he won't be able to see the Cossacks twenty leagues off Paris."

"Bah!" cried the same officer, "we'll drive them back fast enough."

"Well, see if they don't get there," muttered the Marshal under his breath.

Just at this moment the long-expected canteen

mule arrived. It had been impatiently awaited. There was no table, so one had to be improvised by putting a door across some casks. Planks were fixed round this to serve as a bench. The senior officers sat down to their meal; their juniors ate this standing. The curé gave them the best wine he had, and sat down beside his guests. The talk turned upon Herbisse and its neighbourhood. He was amazed to find that they knew every detail of the surrounding country. "You must be natives of this place!" he exclaimed. To put an end to his astonishment, the officers drew out maps from their pockets on which they showed him the names of the very smallest villages. He was more amazed than ever. He never imagined that military science exacted such careful study. "What labour!" cried the good curé. "What trouble, too! And all to fire cannon-balls at one another!"

When supper was over the question of sleeping accommodation had to be faced. In barns close by straw was found, with which each managed to make up a bed. Only the officers on duty with Roustan and myself remained outside the door of the Emperor's room that night. Our worthy host, who placed everything at the Emperor's disposal, took such rest as best he could, and he was still slum-

bering soundly when we left the presbytery, for His Majesty started at daybreak. The good curé when he awoke was much distressed at not being able to bid the Emperor farewell. A purse was handed to him to defray all expenses, and we hastened after the Emperor, who was trying his utmost to get ahead of the Prussians.

The Emperor wanted to reach Soissons before the allies, but although they had to march along bad roads, the latter got the start of our troops, and on entering La Ferté, His Majesty saw them fall back upon Soissons. He was delighted. Soissons was well garrisoned and would arrest the enemy's march, while Marshals Marmont and Mortier with His Majesty in person would attack Blücher in the flank and rear, thus enclosing him as in a trap. But this time, too, the enemy succeeded in escaping just as the Emperor thought he had got them in his grip. Blücher had no sooner presented himself before Soissons than the gates were opened to him. General Moreau, the governor, had already given up the town to Bülow, and thus assured to the allies the passage of the Aisne. On receiving this grievous news the Emperor exclaimed, "The name of Moreau has always been fatal to me!"

Nevertheless, Napoleon hotly pursued the Prus-

sians and tried to prevent their crossing the Aisne. On the 5th of March he sent General Nansouty on ahead, who with his cavalry destroyed the bridge, drove the enemy back to Dorbeny and took a Russian colonel prisoner. After having passed the night at Béry-au-Bac, the Emperor marched on Laon, when news came that the enemy was pushing forward in front of us. It was not the Prussians, however, but a Russian army corps under the command of Sacken. As we advanced we discovered that the Russians had taken up their position on the Craonne heights, covering the road to Laon. It seemed unassailable, but nevertheless our vanguard, under Ney, pushed forward and succeeded in occupying Craonne. For one day's work that was enough, and both sides spent the night in preparing for the morrow's battle. The Emperor stayed at the village of Corbeny, but did not go to bed. Persons from adjacent villages kept continually coming in to give information as to the enemy's position and as to the position of the surrounding country. His Majesty himself used to question them, praising and rewarding them for their zeal, while profiting by all the information that they were able to give. It was thus that he happened to recognise in the mayor of one of the Craonne communes an old

comrade belonging to the La Fère regiment; and he appointed him one of his aides-de-camp and instructed him to act as guide. M. de Bussy, the officer in question, had quitted France during the Terror, and since his return had not resumed his military duties, but lived in retirement upon his estates.

The Emperor that same night met another of his old brother-officers of the La Fère regiment, an Alsatian named Wolff, who had formerly been a sergeant of artillery, his superiors being Napoleon and M. de Bussy. He had just arrived from Strasburg, and bore witness to the friendly disposition of the inhabitants of all the departments which he had traversed. The shock caused in the ranks of the allies by the Emperor's first attacks had been felt as far as the frontier; and along all the routes the peasants, armed and in revolt, had killed many of the enemy and cut off their retreat. Corps of partisans had been formed in the Vosges, headed by officers of tried courage and used to this kind of warfare. The garrison towns and fortresses of the east were models of courage and resolution, nor was it the fault of the population of these parts if, in the words of the Emperor, France did not prove the tomb of all foreign armies. Brave Wolff

after acquainting the Emperor with the news he brought, repeated this to many other persons, of whom I was one. He only stopped a few hours to rest, and then started off immediately, but the Emperor did not let him go before he had decorated him with the Cross of Honour as a reward for his loyalty.

The battle of Craonne commenced, or rather recommenced, on the 7th at daybreak. The infantry was commanded by the Prince de la Moskowa and the Duke de Belluno, who was wounded that day, as also were Generals Grouchy and Nansouty. The difficulty was not so much to scale the heights as to remain there. Yet the French artillery, led by modest, skilful General Drouot, forced that of the enemy gradually to yield ground after a desperately bloody encounter. The heights were too steep to allow our troops to attack the Russians in the flank, so that their retreat proved slow and deadly. However, they had to fall back and abandon the field of battle to our troops. Chased as far as the Ange-Gardien inn, situate on the main road between Soissons and Laon, they suddenly wheeled about and managed to hold this position for some hours.

The Emperor, who in this battle as in all the others of this campaign, had fought as bravely and

encountered as great dangers as the meanest private in his army, now moved his headquarters to the hamlet of Bray. No sooner had he entered the room which served him as study than he called me, took off his boots while leaning on my shoulder, flung hat and sword on the table and, heaving a deep sigh, lay down at full length on his bed. His Majesty looked careworn and sad; tired-out, he fell asleep. After some hours, I woke him to inform him of the arrival of M. de Rumigny, who brought despatches from Châtillon. The latter was at once received in private audience, which lasted for a long time. Of all that took place on this occasion nothing was made public, and such mystification made me think that nothing good could be inferred therefrom. M. de Rumigny set out for Châtillon, where the Duke of Vicenza was waiting for him; and from something Napoleon said when riding away to inspect his outposts, it was easy to see that he could not yet bring himself to conclude that which he held to be a dishonourable peace.

While the Duke of Vicenza was at Châtillon or at Lusigny negotiating for peace, the orders issued by the Emperor either delayed or quickened his attempts to bring about a successful solution of the difficulty. With every fresh gleam of hope he asked

more than they would grant, imitating herein the example set by the allied Sovereigns, whose exactions since the Dresden armistice grew ever greater as they advanced towards France. When finally all was broken off, the Duke of Vicenza rejoined His Majesty at Saint-Dizier. I was in a little parlour adjoining the Emperor's bedroom, and so could not help overhearing their interview. The Duke urged His Majesty to accede to the conditions proposed, affirming that they were as yet quite reasonable, though hereafter they might not be so. As the Duke kept returning to the charge, while combating the Emperor's aversion to decide anything positive, Napoleon at last angrily exclaimed, "Caulaincourt, you're a Russian!" "No, Sire," replied the Duke, warmly; "no, I am a Frenchman. I think I can prove this by urging Your Majesty to conclude peace!"

The discussion was thus hotly prolonged, and I cannot rightly recollect all that passed. But I well remember that whenever the Duke insisted, and strove to make His Majesty appreciate the reasons which, as he thought, made peace indispensable, the Emperor answered, "If I win a battle, as I feel sure I shall, it will enable me to exact better conditions. The tomb of the Russians is marked out

beneath the walls of Paris. My plans are all laid, and victory cannot fail me."

After this interview, which lasted over an hour, and at which the Duke of Vicenza did not succeed in obtaining anything whatever, I saw him come out of the Emperor's room and pass quickly through the one in which I was sitting. I was yet able to perceive that he was much agitated; indeed, tears were rolling down his cheeks. Doubtless he had been much hurt by what the Emperor had said about his Russian sympathies. At any rate I never saw him again until long after, at Fontainebleau.

The Emperor marched with the vanguard, and wanted to reach Laon on the evening of the 8th, but in order to reach this town it became necessary to pass along a narrow road over boggy ground. The enemy held this road, and opposed our passage. After mutual firing, the Emperor postponed his attack to force a way through until the following day, returning to Chavignon for the night. General Flahaut suddenly came to say that the representatives of the allies had broken off all negotiations at the Lusigny conference. The troops were not told of this, though, had they heard it, none would have been surprised. Before it was day, General Gourgaud set off with a picked detach-

ment of men, and by a side route to the left, which led right into the marshy land, he suddenly fell upon the enemy, and in the dark managed to inflict severe punishment upon them, while drawing off their attention from the high road, along which Ney simultaneously tried to force a passage. The whole army pressed forward in his wake, and on the evening of the 9th it was in sight of Laon, and drawn up in line of battle before the enemy, who occupied the town and its surrounding heights. The Duke of Ragusa's army corps had arrived by another way, and also took up its position before the Russo-Prussian forces. His Majesty spent that night in issuing orders for a grand attack to be made next day at dawn.

Just as we were about to start, and when I had hastily finished dressing the Emperor, when, in fact, his foot was already in the stirrup, some cavalry soldiers belonging to the Duke of Ragusa's army rushed up in breathless confusion. The Emperor caused them to be brought before him, and angrily asked the meaning of such disorderly conduct. They said that they had been surprised by the enemy, who had attacked their camp in overwhelming numbers, and it was only by a miracle that they had escaped being cut to pieces. "Aye,"

quoth the Emperor, with lowered brow, "by a miracle of agility. We'll soon see all about that. What has become of the Marshal?"

One of the men said that he had seen the Duke of Ragusa fall, mortally wounded; another stated that he had been taken prisoner. The Emperor despatched his aides-de-camp and orderlies to reconnoitre, when it was found that the reported attack was only too true. The enemy, suddenly assuming the defensive, had overpowered the Duke of Ragusa's column, and had succeeded in capturing part of his artillery. The Marshal himself was, however, neither wounded nor a prisoner. Struggling to rally his shattered forces, he had fallen back upon Rheims.

News of this fresh disaster only served to increase the Emperor's chagrin. The enemy indeed was driven back to the gates of Laon, yet to recapture the town proved impossible. After sundry futile attempts, with a view to hide his retreat from the enemy, the Emperor returned to Chavignon, where we stopped the night. Next day, on the 11th, we moved to Soissons. His Majesty stayed at the abbey, and at once instructed Marshal Mortier and the other commanding officers to take steps for the defence of the town. For two days the Emperor shut himself up in his study,

where he remained hard at work, only quitting it to survey the adjacent country, inspect the fortifications, and control the execution of his plans. While busied thus with such preparations for defence, news reached His Majesty of the capture of Rheims by the Russian General Saint-Priest, notwithstanding desperate resistance on the part of General Corbineau, who, as rumour stated, was either dead or a prisoner. The defence of Soissons was entrusted to the Duke of Treviso, while the Emperor himself advanced by forced marches upon Rheims. That same evening we reached the gates of the city. The Russians never expected such a visit from His Majesty. Our men at once opened fire, without a moment's delay, displaying all the dauntless energy with which Napoleon's presence and example could alone inspire them. The combat lasted all that evening and until a late hour of the night, and when General Saint-Priest was dangerously wounded, his troops lost heart and two hours after midnight abandoned the town. While the Emperor and his army entered by one gateway, the Russians went out by another. The inhabitants crowded round His Majesty, who, before he dismounted, made enquiries as to all the damage which he supposed had been done by the enemy. They told him, however, that

the town had suffered nothing beyond the inevitable harm resulting from a desperate conflict at midnight, and that, moreover, the Russian general had maintained strict discipline among his troops. Among the members of His Majesty's suite on this occasion was General Corbineau; disguised as a civilian, he had been living as a private resident in the town. The Emperor congratulated him upon his courageous conduct.

The Duke of Ragusa joined His Majesty outside Rheims and with his forces helped to recapture it. On meeting the Duke, Napoleon vehemently reproached him for the Laon affair, but his anger did not last long. He soon resumed his former intimacy with the Duke, who, after a long interview, stayed to dine with His Majesty.

The Emperor spent three days at Rheims, to give his troops a rest before continuing this trying campaign. Of this they had need, for some of the veterans found it very hard to stand perpetual forced marches at the end of which there was always a bloody battle. Yet most of these brave fellows who thus unflinchingly obeyed the Emperor's orders, and never shrank from the slightest fatigue or peril, were recruits raised in hot haste and sent to fight with tried soldiers of the best-disciplined armies in

Europe. Most of them had hardly been drilled at all, but got their first lessons from the enemy.

During the three days' halt at Rheims the Emperor was delighted to see General Janssen's army corps, mustering six thousand men, arrive. Such a reinforcement as this came at a most opportune moment. While our soldiers had such short breathing-time before commencing their desperate struggle, the Emperor busied himself with various matters, showing herein all his wonted zeal. In the midst of all these war troubles he nowise neglected the affairs of his Empire, but worked for several hours daily with the Duke of Bassano, received Paris couriers, dictated replies, fatiguing his secretaries as much as he did his generals and his troops. As for himself, he was indefatigable.

CHAPTER XIX

"The pear is ripe"—Fresh plan of attack—Departure from Rheims—Secret mission to King Joseph—Precautions respecting the Empress—The Czar arrives at Troyes—M. Moët gets the Cross—The enemy retreat—Battles of Fère Champenoise and Arcis-sur-Aube—The Emperor's first allusion to the Bourbons—Souvenir of Josephine—The enemy at Epernay—The Emperor at Saint-Dizier—M. de Weissemberg at headquarters—Message for the Emperor of Austria—He is forced to withdraw to Dijon—M. de Lavalette—News from Paris—The National Guard and the schools—Saint-Dizier recaptured—Blücher joins Schwartzenberg—News of King Joseph—Will Paris hold out?—General Dejean's mission—The Emperor leaves for Paris.

THINGS had now reached such a pitch that the grand, the final question of victory or defeat could not long remain a matter of uncertainty. To use one of the Emperor's favourite similes, "The pear was ripe." But who would pluck it? The Emperor when at Rheims never seemed to doubt that the final result would be of advantage to himself. By one of those bold combinations which amaze the world and which, with a single battle, change the whole complexion of affairs, His Majesty, being

powerless to prevent the enemy from approaching Paris, resolved to attack their rear, and thus make them right-about-face, compelling them to fight, and so for the time being save Paris. In order to carry out this plucky scheme, the Emperor accordingly left Rheims. Mindful, however, of the welfare of his wife and son, the Emperor, before starting upon this hazardous enterprise, sent strictly private instructions to his brother King Joseph, lieutenant-general of the Empire, to convey the Empress and her child to a place of safety in case the danger became imminent. Of these instructions I myself knew nothing, such was the secrecy observed by His Majesty. But I afterwards heard that it was from Rheims that such orders had been issued.

From Rheims we went to Epernay, where the garrison and the townsfolk had managed to repulse the enemy. On reaching this place the Emperor heard of the arrival at Troyes of the Czar and the King of Prussia. To show his appreciation of the brave people of Epernay, he rewarded them in the person of their mayor, M. Moët, upon whom he bestowed the Cross of the Legion of Honour.

Before we left Rheims, too, I remember that His Majesty gave the Cross to a simple ploughman belonging to the village of Selles. This brave fellow,

hearing that a detachment of Prussians were approaching, placed himself at the head of a band of the National Guard, and succeeded in capturing forty-five prisoners, three of them officers, whom he brought back to the town.

On the 18th the battle of Fère Champenoise was fought, and as a result the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia hastily retreated to Troyes. On the 20th of March, at the battle of Arcis-sur-Aube, the Emperor perceived that he had other foes to encounter. The Austrians formed up in line, and a huge army commanded by Prince Schwartzenberg spread itself out in front of him when he thought that he had only to deal with a small part of the vanguard. This was a most terrible battle, nor with the fall of night did it end. The Emperor still held the town, despite the efforts of a hundred and thirty thousand men to dislodge him, they being fresh and in perfect condition, while our men, numbering only thirty thousand, were utterly worn-out. Fighting continued during the night, until we were forced to beat a retreat. This was the most disastrous episode of the whole campaign.

On the evening of the 21st we reached Sommepuis, where the Emperor passed the night. It was here that for the first time I heard him mention the name of the Bourbons. His Majesty

was much agitated at the time, and kept muttering to himself incoherently. I only caught these words, which he repeatedly uttered: "*I* recall the Bourbons? Why what would the enemy say? No, no, impossible! I can never do that! Never!"

On the 22nd the allies seized Epernay, which they ordered to be sacked as a punishment for its previous plucky defence. On the 23rd we reached Saint-Dizier, where the Emperor reverted to his original plan of attacking the enemy's rear. Next day, as the Emperor was about to ride to Doulevent, an Austrian staff officer arrived at headquarters, much to our surprise. It was Baron de Weissemberg, the Austrian ambassador at London, who was returning from England. The Emperor requested him to accompany him to Doulevent, and entrusted him with a verbal message for the Emperor of Austria. This monarch, as it afterwards transpired, became separated from the Czar's forces, and consequently was obliged to fall back upon Dijon. I remember that on reaching Doulevent Napoleon received a secret despatch from his trusty Minister of Posts, M. de Lavalette. It was to the effect that, in order to save the capital, there was not a moment to be lost. Up till now news from Paris had always been of a reassuring nature; and the zeal and devotion of the National Guard was for ever being commended.

At various theatres patriotic plays had been given; notably at the Opera, a piece entitled *L'Oriflamme* formed the last topic ever treated by the pen of that famous journalist, Geoffroy. He died soon afterwards, so giving peace, if not to his own soul, at least to those of the actors whom he had lampooned. It is true, the loyal conduct of the National Guard under Marshal Moncey, and the enthusiasm of the Polytechnic and other schools, were in themselves hopeful signs of Parisian allegiance to the Emperor's cause. But events proved stronger than mortal zeal.

On the 26th the Emperor, drawn thither by the sound of guns, moved towards Saint-Dizier. His rearguard had been out-numbered, and was forced to evacuate the town; but Generals Milhaud and Sebastiani succeeded in driving the enemy back to Valcourt on the Marne. The Emperor's presence produced its customary effect, and our adversaries were dispersed in utter confusion, being forced to withdraw to Bar-sur-Ornain. The Emperor advanced upon this last-named place in the belief that he was going to encounter Prince Schwartzenberg, but when close up to the town he discovered that the commander-in-chief was only Count Witzingerode. Schwartzenberg had tricked him; and since the

23rd had effected a juncture with Blücher's forces, who were now sweeping down upon Paris.

Disastrous as was this intelligence, the Emperor determined to verify it himself. On returning from Saint-Dizier he hastened to Vitry, to assure himself that the allies were actually marching on Paris. He saw things personally, and so all his doubts were removed as to this. Would Paris manage to hold out long enough for him to crush the enemy beneath its very walls? This was henceforth his one and only idea. He instantly placed himself at the head of his army, and we marched on Paris by way of Troyes. At Doulencourt a courier from King Joseph informed him that the allies were rapidly advancing upon the capital. Napoleon instantly despatched General Dejean to his brother to advise him of his speedy return. They were to hold out for two days, merely for two days, and then the allied armies would only reach the walls of Paris there to fall into their grave.

What an anxious moment was this for the Emperor! He set off at once with his squadrons of cavalry; I accompanied him as far as Troyes. Here, on the morning of the 30th, he left me behind.

CHAPTER XX

Deplorable souvenirs—The foreigners in Paris—The Emperor leaves Troyes—Ten leagues in two hours—I am summoned to Fontainebleau—Arrival of His Majesty—The Emperor's dejection—Marshal Moncey at Fontainebleau—The Emperor taciturn—His troops his sole distraction—First review at Fontainebleau—"Paris! Paris!"—My house sacked by Cossacks—A present of 50,000 francs—The Emperor's increasing depression—Roustan forbidden to let the Emperor have firearms—The Emperor's extreme kindness to myself—A cheque for 100,000 francs—I convert it into gold—The source of all my troubles.

GOOD heavens! what a fearful time it was! How fraught with painful souvenirs! I have now reached the fatal epoch when the allied armies of Europe trod the soil of France, approaching our capital that for centuries had never been the prey of the foreigner. What a blow for the Emperor, remembering as he must have done his triumphal entries into Vienna and Berlin! What a contrast was his demeanour on the morning after Marengo to his present dejection at Fontainebleau!

As already stated, the Emperor left me at Troyes on the morning of the 30th. He started

at ten o'clock, being only accompanied by the Duke of Vicenza. News had then already reached headquarters that the allied troops were advancing on Paris, but we were far from suspecting that at the very moment of His Majesty's precipitate departure a battle was being fought outside Paris in grim earnest. At any rate, I had heard nothing which could lead me to believe that such was the case. I received instructions to travel towards Essonne, and as means of transport had become very scarce I only managed to get there early on the 31st. I had not long been there when a courier brought me word that I was to come on to Fontainebleau. I did so forthwith; and then discovered that the Emperor had travelled from Troyes to Montereau, a distance of ten leagues, in two hours!

I had not long been at Fontainebleau when the Emperor arrived. Never had he looked so pale and tired as he did now; he scarcely sought to hide his dejection and discouragement. One could see how all the disasters of the past few days had harassed him, following as they did upon each other with such awful precision. He spoke to no one, but at once shut himself up in his study with the Dukes of Vicenza and Bassano and the Prince de Neufchâtel. These gentlemen stayed for a long while with His

Majesty, who afterwards received the staff officers in audience. The Emperor retired late, and still seemed utterly exhausted. Sometimes I heard him stifle a deep sigh as he mentioned the name of "Marmont." For this I could assign no reason, for I had as yet heard nothing of the capitulation of Paris. I only knew that the Duke of Ragusa was one of His Majesty's favourite marshals. That evening I saw Marshal Moncey come to Fontainebleau, who on the previous day had so valiantly commanded the National Guard at Clichy. He was accompanied by Marshal the Duke of Dantzig.

It would be difficult for me to describe the mournful, gloomy silence which prevailed during the next two days at Fontainebleau. Crushed by such a succession of blows, the Emperor rarely went to his study, where commonly he spent so much time at work. So absorbed was he in his thoughts that he often failed to notice the approach of persons he himself had summoned. He gazed at them, so to speak, without seeing them, and often remained for half an hour without saying a single word to them. Or if he asked them a question, he never seemed to hear any answer. The presence even of the Duke of Bassano, or of the Duke of Vicenza, for whom he most frequently sent, could not always

serve to rouse him from his lethargy. Meals were taken at the usual time, and served in the ordinary way; but at these dead silence reigned, which was only broken by the inevitable noise of domestics. While dressing, the same silence was observed. Not a word fell from his lips, and if in the morning I suggested that I should bring him one of his usual potions, I not only got no answer, but from the blank look on his face I doubted if he had even heard me. For all his attendants such apathy proved highly distressing.

Was the Emperor really vanquished by his ill fortune? Had his genius, like his physical faculties, become paralysed? I may frankly state that, seeing him so different from what he was after the disasters of Moscow, or even when he left me at Troyes, I was inclined to think so. But I was wrong. He was merely dominated by one fixed idea, viz., to resume the offensive and march straight upon Paris. And indeed, if abashed and overcome in the presence of his most faithful ministers and generals, the sight of his soldiers always revived him, doubtless because the first-named were for ever offering prudent advice, whereas the latter, to orders however rash, had only one answer, to wit, "Long live the Emperor!" On the 2nd of April, by way of a distraction, he re-

viewed his Guards in the courtyard at Fontainebleau. He addressed them in a firm, clear voice, and said:

"Soldiers! The enemy have stolen three marches upon us and have made themselves masters of Paris. They must be driven out. Worthless Frenchmen, emigrants whom we had pardoned, have hoisted the white flag and joined issue with the enemy. Cowards! they shall pay the penalty of such baseness. Let us swear to conquer or to die, and to make that tricolour respected which for twenty years has been ours along the road of glory and of honour."

The enthusiasm of the troops was tremendous on thus hearing the voice of their chief. One cry rang out along the ranks, the cry of "Paris! Paris!" But as he crossed the threshold of the palace, the Emperor scarcely looked one whit less anxious, for doubtless he feared that his vehement desire to march on Paris might meet with opposition from his generals.

The course of events indeed seemed increasingly adverse to the Emperor's wishes. The Duke of Vicenza, who had been sent to Paris (where a provisional government, under the Prince of Benevento, had been established), returned without

having been successful in his mission to the Emperor Alexander, and each day His Majesty was distressed at hearing that many of the marshals and generals had resolved to uphold the new government, including the Prince de Neufchâtel, whose disaffection specially grieved the Emperor. Indeed I may add that, strangers though we were to all the combinations of politics, this filled us all with amazement.

It here becomes necessary for me to speak of myself, albeit throughout these Memoirs I have striven to do so as little as possible. This, in justice to myself, all readers will admit. Yet what I have to say is too closely connected with my last days spent in the Emperor's service for me to imagine that by its recital I shall incur reproach. As may well be supposed, I felt very uneasy about my family, from whom for long past I had received no news. The painful malady from which I was suffering had also got much worse in consequence of all the hardships and privations of these latter campaigns. Yet the Emperor's mental distress so completely absorbed me, that I took no precautions whatever to cure my own physical ills. I never even thought of claiming protection for the country-house which I owned in the neighbourhood

of Fontainebleau. Certain freebooters had taken up their abode there, after sacking the premises and destroying everything, even the little flock of sheep which the Empress Josephine had kindly given me.

The Emperor, who had heard of this from others, said to me one morning, when dressing, "Constant, I ought to indemnify you."

"What for, Sire?"

"Why, my lad, I hear that your house has been sacked, and I know that you lost a lot during the Russian campaign. I have given orders for a sum of fifty thousand francs to be paid to you to cover all that."

I thanked His Majesty for thus liberally indemnifying me for all my loss. This incident occurred during the early days of our last stay at Fontainebleau.

At the same time, when there was a talk of removing the Emperor to the island of Elba, the Grand Marshal of the Palace one day asked me if I would accompany His Majesty. God is my witness that such was my sole desire, and that my one thought was to devote my whole life to serving the Emperor. Without a moment's reflection I told the Grand Marshal that of course I would go, and I at once began to prepare for a journey, not long

in itself, but the duration of which no one at the moment could precisely fix.

Meanwhile the Emperor grew daily sadder and more anxious, and whenever, as often happened, I saw him alone, I invariably tried to keep him company whenever possible. I noticed how greatly agitated he was on reading despatches from Paris. This actually reached such a pitch that on several occasions I saw him dig his nails into his thigh so vehemently that the blood came, though he did so without noticing it. I ventured to tell him as gently as possible what he had done, hoping to rouse him from his gloomy lethargy. The Emperor often told Roustan to bring him his pistols; but seeing how worried my Royal master was, I begged Roustan never to do so, however much His Majesty might ask him. I deemed it expedient to inform the Duke of Vicenza of my conduct, who entirely approved of it.

One morning, on the 10th or 11th of April, the Emperor, who when dressing had remained perfectly silent, sent for me. I had scarcely entered the room when he said to me in the kindest manner possible:

"My dear Constant, here is a cheque for one hundred thousand francs, which Peyrache will cash for you. If your wife arrives here before we leave, you can give it to her; but if she does not come

bury the money in a corner of your estate. Mark the spot exactly and let her know of it by some trustworthy person. Those who have served me so well shall never want. Your wife can buy a farm, or invest the money. She can live with your mother and your sister, and then you will not feel afraid that you have left them in need."

I was greatly touched by such magnificent generosity on the part of the Emperor, and could scarcely find words to express my deep gratitude. For, as a matter of fact, fortune I had none—only my ruined house and the 50,000 francs destined to repair it.

Under these circumstances, not knowing when I should see my wife again, I proceeded to act on His Majesty's advice. I converted my 100,000 francs into gold, which I placed in five sacks, and took Denis, the valet of the wardrobe, with me, whose probity I knew to be beyond question, and we went together towards the forest, so as not to be observed by any of the persons living in the house. We stealthily entered a small enclosure belonging to me, the entrance to which was hidden by shrubs. Here, with Denis's help, I managed to bury my treasure, and after taking accurate note of the spot, I returned to the palace, far from suspecting how these cursed 100,000 francs would bring me such chagrin and trouble later on.

CHAPTER XXI

Our position at Fontainebleau—The Emperor's dethronement deemed impossible—Numerous petitions—Effect of the newspapers upon Napoleon—The Duke of Bassano—The Emperor abdicates—His calmness at night-time—He takes poison—His resolve to die—M. Yvan leaves for Paris—Departure of Roustan—Marshal Macdonald's farewell—The sabre of Mourad Bey—The Emperor more talkative than usual—His variable moods—His disgust at letters from Paris—Remarkable instance of the Emperor's dejection—A fair lady at Fontainebleau—A night of suspense—An adventure at Saint-Cloud—I go to Bourg-la-Reine—Mother and daughter—Sad doings at Fontainebleau—The Emperor questions me—My frank reply—The Emperor's speech about the Duke of Bassano.

Now more than ever I have to crave the indulgence of the reader as to the order in which I have placed the several events witnessed by me during the Emperor's stay at Fontainebleau. I also ask to be excused for any inexactness as to dates, for I have, as it were, but a hazy recollection of all that took place during the disastrous twenty days which elapsed between the occupation of Paris and His Majesty's departure for the island of Elba.

I was so absorbed in the dire misfortunes which

had overtaken my dear master that I gave little thought to anything else. His sufferings were ours as well; we heeded nothing save him.

During the early part of our stay at Fontainebleau we never for an instant imagined that the Emperor would soon cease to rule over France. We all seemed under the impression that the Emperor of Austria would never consent to the dethronement of his son-in-law, daughter and grandson. But we were strangely mistaken. During these days I noticed that an unusual number of petitions was addressed to His Majesty, though I cannot say if they received favourable replies, nor indeed, if they received replies at all.

The Emperor would often take up the journals, and after rapidly glancing at them, would fling them angrily aside; and if one remembers how filled these were with hideous insults heaped upon him by writers who had formerly fawned upon him, it is easy to conceive His Majesty's disgust. The Emperor very often remained alone, the person he most frequently saw being the Duke of Bassano, the only one of his ministers who was at Fontainebleau, for the Duke of Vicenza, being continually entrusted with missions, only passed through from time to time. This he particularly did while the Emperor still

hoped that a regency might be established in his son's favour. He was more violently moved when at last he had to renounce his son's claim to the throne than when he was called upon to sacrifice his own pretensions thereto. When the Marshals or the Duke of Vicenza spoke to His Majesty concerning his own personal arrangements, it was easy to see that he only listened to them with extreme repugnance.

One day when the island of Elba was mentioned and a sum of so-and-so-much a year, I heard the Emperor sharply reply, "That's too much, far too much for me. If I am only a soldier, I don't want more than a louis a day."

However, the moment came when, urged by all, His Majesty consented to sign the deed of abdication, as desired. This memorable document ran as follows:

"The Allied Powers having proclaimed the Emperor Napoleon to be the sole obstacle to the re-establishment of peace in Europe, the Emperor Napoleon, true to his oath, hereby declares that he renounces all rights possessed by himself and his heirs to the throne of France, and that there is no personal sacrifice, not even that of his own life,

which he is not ready to make in the interests of France.

"Given at our Palace of Fontainebleau,

"*April* 11*th*, 1814,

"NAPOLEON."

There is no need for me to say that I had no knowledge whatever of such a document. It was one of those profound cabinet secrets which do not penetrate to the recesses of the Imperial bedchamber. I only recollect that on that very day the matter was vaguely discussed by all the members of the household. I also noticed that something unusual had occurred. All day long the Emperor seemed sadder than ever, but I was yet far from foreseeing all the torments of the night which followed that fatal day!

I must now beg the reader to give his whole attention to what I am about to narrate. I am now writing a page of history when I record a fact of melancholy import in the biography of the Emperor, a fact which has led to endless controversy, and the distressing details of which, while necessarily doubtful for others, are solely known to myself. I allude to the Emperor's attempted suicide at Fontainebleau by taking poison. I hope that there

is no need for me to make a protest of my truthfulness. I have too deep a sense of the importance of such a revelation to allow myself to cut away or to add the slightest detail bearing on the actual facts. These I intend to recount just as they happened, just as I witnessed them, just as in all their dire significance they are graven on my memory.

On the evening of the 11th of April I undressed the Emperor as usual. He had retired to rest rather earlier that night, for, if I remember rightly, it was not quite half-past ten. On going to bed he seemed in rather better spirits. I slept in a small room above that of the Emperor, with which it was connected by a private staircase. For some time past I had been careful to sleep in my clothes so as to answer His Majesty's summons with greater promptitude. At midnight, when sleeping soundly, I was awakened by M. Pelard, who was on duty. He told me that the Emperor had asked for me, and, on opening my eyes, I saw how horrorstruck he looked. I leapt out of bed, and as we hurried down the staircase M. Pelard added, "The Emperor has dissolved something in a glass and has drunk it."

I entered His Majesty's room a prey to the most agonising fears. He had gone back to bed, but on the floor near the chimneypiece I noticed

the fragments of a *sachet* of leather and black silk, the same one to which allusion has already been made in these Memoirs. It was, in fact, the talisman which ever since the Egyptian campaign he wore round his neck, and which I used to keep so carefully for him during the interval between one campaign and another. Ah! could I only have known what it contained! In this fatal instant the whole dreadful truth became plain to me!

As I stood by the Emperor's bedside, he gasped out, "Constant, I am dying! I could not bear the torture any longer, and, above all, the humiliation of seeing myself surrounded by foreign agents. They have trailed my eagles through the mire! They have misjudged me! But, my good Constant, they will be sorry when I am gone. Marmont has given me my final blow. Unhappy man! I was fond of him! That Berthier should have forsaken me cuts me to the core! My old friends! My comrades in arms!" . . . . The Emperor said several other things to me, which I hesitate to repeat, since it is impossible for me to give his actual words. In such an awful moment of suspense, however, I could not rightly engrave these upon my memory. As I watched his face intently I noticed convulsive twitchings, the symptoms of a crisis, which terrified

me. Slight vomiting, however, gave me grounds for hope. The Emperor, despite his physical and mental suffering, never lost his nerve. After the first vomiting bout, he said to me, "Constant, send for Caulaincourt and Yvan."

I half-opened the door in order to tell M. Pelard without quitting the Emperor's room. On going back to his bedside I begged him to take a soothing potion, but all my efforts were vain; he refused to do so, such was his firm resolve to die, which never wavered now, when death was so near.

Despite his obstinate refusals, I continued my entreaties, when M. de Caulaincourt and Dr. Yvan entered. His Majesty made a sign to the former to approach the bed, and said:

"Caulaincourt, I confide my wife and my child to your care; serve them as you have served me. I have not long to live!"

Then His Majesty had another attack of vomiting, though less severe than the first. Meanwhile I tried to tell M. de Caulaincourt that the Emperor had taken poison. He seemed to catch my meaning, half-expressed though it was, for sobs choked my utterance. Dr. Yvan approached, and the Emperor said to him:

"Do you think the dose was strong enough?"

Such words were an enigma to M. Yvan, as, so far as I can gather, he had never known of the existence of the *sachet*, so he replied:

"I do not understand what Your Majesty means."

The Emperor made no answer.

All three of us after much persuasion induced His Majesty to take some tea. Yet even when I brought him some, made in a great hurry, he pushed the cup aside, and said, "Leave me alone, Constant, do!" After drinking this tea the vomitings ceased, and he soon seemed easier. He dropped off into a doze, when the two gentlemen went softly out of the room, while I sat there waiting for him to wake.

After a sleep of some hours the Emperor woke, and seemed almost in his usual health, although his face bore traces of all that he had suffered. While I helped him to dress he never made the slightest allusion, directly or indirectly, to the fearful night we had just spent. He breakfasted in the ordinary way, only somewhat later than usual. He had completely regained his composure, and he seemed in better spirits than for long past. Was this due to his contentment at having escaped the death for which, in a moment of dejection, he longed? Or was it not rather because he now felt certain that

death would not reach him when in bed, but only when on the battlefield? However that may be, I attribute the Emperor's providential escape to the fact that the poison contained in the *sachet* had lost its efficacy.

When things had resumed their normal course without anyone in the palace, except those named, getting to know that anything had occurred, I heard that Dr. Yvan had quitted Fontainebleau. Distressed at the question which the Emperor in the presence of M. de Caulaincourt had asked him, and fearing that he might be suspected of having supplied Napoleon with the means of taking his own life, this able physician, who had for so long faithfully served the Emperor, lost his head, as it were, when contemplating the responsibility which, as he thought, weighed upon him. Hastening from the Emperor's room, he found a horse ready saddled and bridled in one of the palace courtyards. He leapt on to it and galloped off to Paris. On the morning of the same day Roustan left Fontainebleau.

On the 12th of April Marshal Macdonald also took his last leave of the Emperor. When the Marshal was shown into the room, His Majesty was still suffering from the effects of the previous night, and I fancy the Marshal must have noticed

this, though unable to guess the reason for it. He brought with him the treaty made by His Majesty with the allies, and I left the room just as the Emperor was about to sign it. A few moments later the Duke of Vicenza called me, and the Emperor said:

"Constant, go and get me the sabre given to me in Egypt by Mourad Bey. You know the one I mean?"

"Yes, Sire."

I went out and at once brought back this splendid sword, which the Emperor had worn at the battle of Mont-Tabor, so he often used to tell me. I gave it to the Duke of Vicenza, from whose hands the Emperor took it and presented it to Marshal Macdonald, and as I was going out of the room I heard the Emperor speak to him in affectionate terms and call him his worthy friend.

These gentlemen, if I remember rightly, stayed to breakfast with His Majesty, who during the meal appeared in far better spirits than usual. But it was only a momentary flash of mirth; for all the while we were at Fontainebleau His Majesty's moods constantly changed. In the same day I have seen him remain for hours in a state of the deepest melancholy, and then, a minute later, he

would be striding up and down his room humming the tune of "La Monaca." Then after that he would relapse into a sort of lethargy, when he apparently saw and heard nothing of what was going on, and even forgot that he had ever given me any orders.

One thing I specially noted, and this was the extraordinary effect which the mere sight of letters from Paris produced upon him. As soon as he saw any he became extremely agitated—I may without exaggeration say, convulsed.

To show how singularly preoccupied the Emperor was, I will quote the following instance which I happen to recollect. While we were at Fontainebleau, the Countess W. (of whom I have already spoken) arrived there, and, sending for me, told me how anxious she was to see the Emperor. Thinking that it would serve to distract His Majesty, I mentioned the matter to him that evening, when he told me to ask her to come at ten o'clock. As may be imagined, Madame W. kept this appointment punctually. I went into the Emperor's room to announce her arrival. His Majesty lay on the bed, lost in his thoughts. So absorbed was he that I had to repeat my information, when he replied, "Ask her to wait."

So she waited in an adjoining apartment, I remaining with her to keep her company. The night wore on; and as the hours slowly passed, I saw how distressed was the fair visitor at not being summoned to the Emperor's presence. I went into His Majesty's room again. He was not asleep, but seemed so profoundly absorbed in his reflections that he never gave me any answer. It was now almost daylight, and the Countess, fearing she would be seen by the servants, went away ineffably grieved at not having been able to say farewell to the object of all her affections. She had been gone more than an hour when the Emperor, remembering that she was waiting, sent for her. I told him of the Countess' departure and of her despair.[1] The Emperor was much moved and said:

"Poor woman, she will think I wanted to snub her! Constant, I really am so sorry! If you see her, do tell her. But I have so many things here!" And the Emperor tapped his forehead.

[1] I afterwards learnt that the Countess W. went with her son to see the Emperor in the island of Elba. This child bore a great likeness to His Majesty, and it was this visit which gave rise to the rumour that the King of Rome had been brought to see his father. Madame W. only stayed for a short time on the island.

This visit to Fontainebleau reminds me of another of much the same kind. Sometime after his marriage with Marie Louise, the Emperor conceived a fancy for a Mademoiselle L., whose mother, marrying again, had chosen as husband an army colonel. These ladies were living at Bourg-la-Reine when M. de ——, one of the Emperor's most zealous procurers, discovered them. The young lady at that time was only seventeen. She was dark, of medium height but perfect proportions, possessing dainty feet and hands, and a grace about her whole person which was most alluring.

The Emperor told me one evening to go and fetch her from her mother's, and bring her back about eleven o'clock that night. My visit occasioned no surprise; indeed, I could see that the ladies had been prepared for it, no doubt by their worthy patron, for they awaited me with an impatience which they never attempted to hide. The girl, dressed out in her best, looked lovely, while the mother beamed with joy at the honour about to be conferred upon her child. I saw that they evidently thought that the Emperor could not fail to be ensnared by such charms, and would fall violently in love. But all this was purely imaginary, as the Emperor took matters very coolly. We reached

Saint-Cloud at eleven, entering the château by way of the orangery to avoid being spied upon by the indiscreet. As I had the keys of all the doors I took her straight to the Emperor's room unobserved, where she stopped for about three hours. At the end of this time I escorted her home again.

This young lady, whom the Emperor at the most only saw about four times, came to Fontainebleau also, accompanied by her mother. But as they failed to see Napoleon, these ladies, like the Countess W., determined to travel to the island of Elba in search of him, where, so they say, the Emperor married the girl to a colonel of artillery.

The tale just chronicled takes me back to happier days. I must, however, go back to our melancholy stay at Fontainebleau and the Emperor's dark time of distress. Yet through it all his kindliness and good-nature only seemed to increase. In my usual frank way I always told him exactly what I had heard, and I remember once saying to him that many people were wont to accuse the Duke de Bassano of having protracted these latter wars which for us had proved so fatal.

"That is a gross injustice to him," said the Emperor. "Poor Maret! It is most unfair to accuse him thus. He only carried out my orders."

Then, as often before when alluding to serious matters, he would add:

"How shameful! How humiliating! To think that in my own palace I should have a lot of foreign agents!"

CHAPTER XXII

The Grand Marshal and General Drouot—His Majesty's fate —The commissioners of the allies—The Emperor's disgust —He prefers the English commissioner—Monotony of our stay in the palace—The Emperor becomes calmer—The eve of departure—The fatal hundred thousand francs—The Grand Marshal investigates—What I ought to have done —Inconceivable oversight on the part of the Emperor—I dig up the buried gold and return it to the Emperor—I quit the palace—Hubert comes to see me—I am offered three hundred thousand francs to accompany the Emperor—I lose my head—The Emperor departs—My grief—False construction put upon my conduct—M. de Turenne wrongfully accused—Examples of my disinterestedness—Refusal of four hundred thousand francs—Marchand, through me, enters the Emperor's service—His gratefulness.

AFTER the 12th of April the Emperor, of all his suite, had only two Court officials in attendance. These were the Grand Marshal of the Palace and General Count Drouot. The Emperor's fate and his consent to accept it was soon an open secret in the palace. On the 16th the commissioners of the allies arrived at Fontainebleau who had been instructed to accompany His Majesty to the place

whence he was to embark for Elba. These were Count Schouvaloff, the Czar's aide-de-camp, representing Russia; Colonel Neil Campbell, England; General Kohler, Austria; and Count Waldburg-Truchsess, Prussia. Though His Majesty had himself asked to be accompanied by these four commissioners, their presence at Fontainebleau was evidently very disagreeable to him. These gentlemen, indeed, were received in very different fashion by the Emperor, and from certain remarks made by His Majesty, I gathered that, of all his enemies, he respected the English most, and he had a special liking for Colonel Campbell, whom he greeted far more cordially than the other commissioners, while he showed positive aversion for the Prussian representative, though he endeavoured to hide this as best he could.

The arrival of these gentlemen was the one incident which served to break the mournful monotony of the Emperor's life at Fontainebleau. All was gloomy and silent there, yet His Majesty seemed personally more composed, now that he had definitely made up his mind, than when still hovering between this or that alternative. He sometimes spoke to me of the Empress and of his son, yet not as often as I expected. I was much struck by one thing, viz.,

that never a word crossed his lips concerning his rash resolution of the night of the 11th, which, as we have seen, was mercifully unattended by fatal consequences. What a night, what a night that was! All my life I shall never think of it without trembling.

By degrees the Emperor seemed to get used to the presence of the foreign commissioners, and the whole household was now busied in making preparations for departure. One day, as I was dressing His Majesty, he said to me, "Well, my boy, get your cart ready, and we'll go and hoe turnips together!" I little thought that, in spite of my earnest wish, a fatal combination of circumstances was to prevent my accompanying the Emperor into exile.

The day previous to our departure the Grand Marshal of the Palace sent for me. Having given me certain orders relative to the journey, he told me that the Emperor wished to know how much money I had of his. I at once gave the Grand Marshal an exact statement of the funds in my possession, which amounted to about three hundred thousand francs, including the gold contained in the cash-box entrusted to me by Baron Fain, provided he did not travel with the Emperor. An hour afterwards the Grand Marshal sent for me again

to say that His Majesty thought he must have another one hundred thousand francs besides. I replied that there was certainly one hundred thousand francs which the Emperor had given to me, telling me to bury them in my garden. I then told him all the details previously recorded, and begged him to ask the Emperor if it was to this one hundred thousand francs that he referred. Count Bertrand promised to do so, and I then committed the huge mistake of not addressing myself at once to the Emperor. In my place nothing would have been easier, and I had often found that it was far better, if possible, to go straight to him than to count upon any intermediary aid. Judge of my astonishment when the Grand Marshal told me that the Emperor had no recollection of ever having given me the sum in question. At first I grew crimson with wrath and indignation. What? The Emperor had actually let Count Bertrand think that I, his faithful servant, had embezzled a sum which he had given me under the circumstances already stated! My brain reeled at the bare thought of such a thing! Overcome by emotion, I assured the Grand Marshal that in an hour's time at the most I would restore to him the Emperor's baneful gift.

As I hurriedly crossed the palace courtyard, I

met M. de Turenne, to whom I related all that had just happened. "I am not at all surprised," said he; "we shall see much else of that sort, too." A prey to a kind of moral fever, I hastened in search of Denis, the groom of the bedchamber already mentioned. Fortunately I found him, and we both went to my country place. As God is my witness, the loss of the one hundred thousand francs never troubled me an atom; in my grief and agitation I never even thought of it. As before, we took the forest road to avoid being observed. We began digging, and in my excitement I missed the precise spot, so that after a while, as nothing came to light, I thought that someone must have seen us bury the money and that it was stolen. What, thought I, will they say of me? Will they believe my word? The Grand Marshal would look upon me as a dishonest fellow. Crushed by such awful thoughts, I was about to stop digging, when Denis pointed out to me that we had overshot the mark by several feet. I eagerly cherished this last faint spark of hope. We dug more eagerly than ever, and without exaggeration I may say that my joy verged on delirium when I saw the first of the bags. We got out all the five, and with the help of Denis I managed to carry them back to the palace. I instantly placed them in the

hands of the Grand Marshal, together with the keys of the Emperor's dressing-bag and the cash-box which Baron Fain had given me to keep. "Sir," said I, "be so good as to tell His Majesty that I shall not accompany him."

"I will do so."

After this curt and cold reply, I instantly left the palace and went to M. Clément's, in the Rue Coq-Gris, who for a long while had looked after matters connected with my house while I myself was away on active service with the Emperor. Here I gave vent to my despair. I was exasperated to think that my honesty had been called in question, I who for fourteen years had served the Emperor with scrupulous unselfishness, so scrupulous, indeed, that some folk termed it folly; I, who had never asked the Emperor for anything for myself or my family! I was beside myself at the thought that the Emperor, who was well aware of my probity, should have made me appear dishonest in the eyes of a third person. The more I thought of all this the greater was my irritation, and the less was I able to discover a motive for such injury. My despair was at its height when M. Hubert, one of His Majesty's valets, came to say that the Emperor was willing to give me whatever I liked if

I would accompany him, and that three hundred thousand francs should be paid over to me at once. Let me ask all honest men what they would have done in my place? I replied that when I had resolved to sacrifice my whole life to the service of the unfortunate Emperor I had not done so with a view to base gain, and I said that I was heart-broken to think that in Count Bertrand's eyes he had made me seem an impostor and a dishonest person. How happy I should have been if the Emperor had never dreamed of giving me those accursed one hundred thousand francs! If I had only had twenty-four hours in which to reflect, I should have overcome my resentment, I should have thought solely of the Emperor, and I should have followed him. But by a dread fatality it was not to be.

All this happened on the 19th of April, a day which proved the most unhappy one of my whole life. What a night of grief was mine! And how distressed I was to hear next day that the Emperor had started at noon after bidding his Guards farewell! When morning came all my resentment had vanished directly I thought of the Emperor. A score of times I wanted to go to the palace; a score of times after he had gone I wanted to follow him in

a post-chaise. It was the offer he had made me through Hubert which restrained me. "Perhaps," thought I, "he will think it is that which brings me back. No doubt that is what everybody about him will say, and what a bad opinion they will have of me!"

So cruelly perplexed was I that I could not decide. All that a man can possibly suffer I suffered; I could scarcely believe that I was separated from the Emperor; that where he was I was not. To such mental misery, physical sufferings succeeded, and a return of my malady obliged me to keep my bed for some considerable time.

Thus the Emperor had gone, while I remained in my country house, which henceforth had become a very mournful home for me. I held no communication with anybody, never read the papers, nor attempted to get any news. After a while I received a visit from one of my Paris friends, telling me that the papers spoke of my conduct, ignoring the real facts, and censuring me severely. He also said that information had been supplied to the press by M. de Turenne, who had despatched a note to the various editors bitterly criticising me. I am bound to say that I did not believe this. I knew M. de Turenne too well to believe that he was capable of so un-

worthy a proceeding, particularly as I had told him everything quite frankly, and as he had answered me in the way mentioned. At any rate, the mischief was done, and so strangely complicated was my position that I found myself obliged to keep silence. Nothing, indeed, would have been more easy for me than to reply to such a slander by stating the exact facts. Yet did it behove me to justify myself in this way, and, so to speak, accuse the Emperor at a moment when His Majesty's enemies were so incensed against him? When I beheld so great a man exposed to the darts of calumny, I deemed it but right that I, obscure as I was, and one of the crowd, should suffer likewise from their sting. Time has now revealed the truth which I have unrestrictedly set forth here, not in order to excuse myself, for, on the contrary, I accuse myself of being selfish enough to care what was likely to be said about me if I eventually joined the Emperor's suite when he left for Elba. At any rate, let me say in my favour that, after all, my annoyance was only natural under the circumstances.

It is a piece of gratuitous ill-nature to attribute my leaving the Emperor to interested motives. It needs but the most ordinary common-sense to see at once that by going with him I had everything to

gain. In fact, the overwhelming chagrin which he caused me did far more harm to my future welfare than had I chosen to resume my duties. What could I hope to gain by staying in France, where nothing was mine by right? Moreover, is it not plain to anyone who cares to consider my position of trust as the Emperor's body-servant that, if I had been guided by love of gold, I should have been able to reap a rich harvest without any fear of detection? But my disinterestedness was so well known that I defy anyone to say that during the whole time I enjoyed the Emperor's favour I ever turned this to my own pecuniary advantage. Many a time I refused to recommend a petition just because the request to do so was accompanied by an offer of money, often a very handsome one. Let me cite this instance out of many. I was once offered the sum of four hundred thousand francs by a lady of high rank if I could induce the Emperor favourably to consider a petition in which she claimed certain property of hers on which the harbour of Bayonne had been built. I had succeeded with petitions far more difficult than this, and yet I declined to present it solely because it was accompanied by a bribe. I should like to have obliged the lady merely for the pleasure of obliging

her. It was only in this way that I ever asked favours of the Emperor, which he almost always granted me. Nor can it be said of me that I got His Majesty to accord me special privileges, lottery agencies, or anything of that sort, in which, as is well known, scandalous trafficking went on, though doubtless if I had chosen to ask the Emperor, he would have complied with my request.

Such was the trust which His Majesty had ever placed in me, that even at Fontainebleau, as it had been decided that none of the ordinary valets were to accompany him to the island of Elba, the Emperor commissioned me to choose a young man who might be of help to me in my duties. I selected a footman, as to whose probity I felt assured, a son of Madame Marchand, the King of Rome's head nurse. I spoke of him to the Emperor, who was quite agreeable, and then informed M. Marchand. He gratefully accepted, and expressed his delight at being able to accompany us. I say "us," for at the time I was far from anticipating the foregoing fatal circumstances. From what M. Marchand afterwards said of me at the Tuileries during the Hundred Days, it will be seen that I did not put my trust in one who was ungrateful and false.

CHAPTER XXIII

My life of seclusion—I rarely read a newspaper—I begin to appreciate the Emperor's greatness—The Emperor lands—The good master and the great man—Uncertainty of my position—Souvenir of the Emperor's kindness—His Majesty asks after me—M. Marchand speaks up for me—My absence from Paris prolonged—The Emperor at the Tuileries—Circumstantial details—The Bourbon portraits—The mob at the Carrousel—"Long live the Emperor!"—A panic—General Excelmans and the tricolour—Arrival of the Emperor—The Archchancellor and Queen Hortense—Grand banquet—Marshal Bertrand's father—The Emperor and the dish of lentils—Two grenadiers of Elba—The power of sleep—His Majesty and his officers on half-pay—M. de Saint-Chamans—Review in the Carrousel—The Emperor and the people—General enthusiasm—My life as lonely as ever—Princess Catherine of Würtemberg and Prince Jerome—Thirteen at table—Death of Princess Eliza—The First Consul and Captain Godeau.

ALIENATED from everything after the Emperor's departure for Elba, filled with ineffable gratitude for all the bounties showered upon me by His Majesty during the fourteen years which I had been in his service, I thought unceasingly of this great man, and delighted to recall every little incident of my past

life. I deemed it fittest and more in accordance with my former position to lead a life of seclusion, and I spent my time tranquilly enough at home, in the country house that I had purchased. One fatal thought, however, possessed me. It was the fear that persons jealous of my former favoured position might succeed in deceiving the Emperor as to my unswerving devotion to him personally, and strengthen the false impression concerning me, which at one moment they had managed to create. Comforted though I was by my consciousness of right, this idea proved deeply painful to me, until, as it will be seen, I happily felt assured that my fears on this score were wholly unfounded.

Though wholly ignorant of politics, I yet used to read with keen interest the newspaper that I received in my retreat ever since the great change in events which was styled the Restoration, and it was not difficult for me to perceive the marked difference between the old government and the new. Everywhere I saw a series of titled personages elected to replace those distinguished men who under the Empire had shown such repeated proofs of merit and of valour. But I was far from supposing that, despite the great number of malcontents, fortune and his devoted army would bring him back

to the throne, which voluntarily he had renounced rather than cause a civil war in France. Indeed, it would be impossible to express my astonishment when I received the first news of the Emperor's landing on the coast of Provence. I eagerly read the admirable manifesto, in which he declared that his eagles should fly from belfry to belfry, he following them closely in his triumphal progress from Gulf Juan to Paris.

Here I must make a confession. Not until I had left the Emperor did I comprehend all the immensity of his greatness. Entering his service almost simultaneously with the commencement of the Consulate, when I was quite young, he had grown, so to speak, without my noticing this; and I looked upon him more as an excellent master than as an illustrious man. Separation, however, produced upon me an effect far other than it usually does. Even to-day I am surprised to think how boldly I asserted my views to the Emperor, telling him frankly what I thought. But his kindness seemed to encourage me, for often, instead of being vexed at my impetuosity, he would smile and say gently, "Come, come, Constant, don't get angry!"

What consummate good-nature on the part of one so exalted! Well, as his valet, I hardly took

any count of this, though since then I have appreciated all its worth.

On hearing of the Emperor's return, my first impulse was to go at once to the palace to meet him on his arrival; but reflection and the advice of my family and friends made me come to the conclusion that it would be more fitting to await his commands if he wished to recall me to his service. I was glad that I did so; and it was a pleasure to me to know that His Majesty approved of my conduct, for I have it on excellent authority that the Emperor had no sooner got to the Tuileries than he asked M. Eible, the hall-porter, "Well, what has become of Constant? How is he? Where is he?"

"Sire, he is at his country place, which he has never quitted."

"Good, very good. He's a lucky fellow; he's hoeing his turnips!"

I also heard that soon after His Majesty's return, when going through the list of pensions paid out of his privy purse, he was so good as to put a note against mine to the effect that it should be increased.

It has already been seen that I was fortunate enough to find M. Marchand a post in the Em-

peror's service. The following was afterwards repeated to me by an eye-witness. At the beginning of the Hundred Days M. Marchand was in one of the *salons* of the Tuileries, where several persons were talking about me in rather an ill-natured fashion. Marchand abruptly interposed, telling them that there was not a word of truth in all the imputations cast upon me, adding that, all the while I was in favour, I had constantly obliged all the members of the household who had ever asked me to do so, and that I had never harmed anyone. As regards this latter statement of M. Marchand, I may say that it is the bare truth. But I was none the less sensible of his generous and loyal defence of my character in my absence.

Being away from Paris on the 20th of March, 1815, I can say nothing about this memorable time myself, but from some of my friends I managed to glean certain details concerning the night which followed the Emperor's entry into the palace, which had now once more become an Imperial residence. It may well be imagined how eager I was to know everything about the great man who at this moment was looked upon as the saviour of France.

I will begin by giving an exact account of what was told me by a brave and excellent friend

of mine, at that time a sergeant of the Paris National Guard, who, as it happened, was on duty at the Tuileries on the 20th of March.

"At midday," he said, "three companies of the National Guard marched into the Tuileries courtyard for sentry duty at all the posts in the palace. I was of their number, and my comrades and myself were both struck by the extraordinary mournfulness which the sight of an abandoned palace provoked. Everything, indeed, looked deserted; only here and there we saw one or two fellows in the King's uniform, who were busy removing certain portraits of the different members of the Bourbon family. We also heard the frantic shouts of the mob, who climbed up the railings and tried to get over them—an appalling sight, as if all the rioters were minded to sack the palace.

"We had only been stationed in the inner courtyard for about a quarter of an hour, when an accident, of no great gravity in itself, alarmed us and those, too, who thronged the Carrousel gratings. We saw sparks rising above the chimney of the King's room; owing to the enormous quantity of papers that had been burned, it had caught fire. This accident gave rise to the most sinister conjectures, and soon the rumour got

afloat that the Tuileries had been undermined before the departure of Louis XVIII. Immediately a patrol of fifteen men of the National Guard was formed, under the command of a sergeant. They explored the whole palace from roof to basement, to make sure that no danger really existed.

"Reassured on this point, we yet had other causes for uneasiness. On mounting guard, we had heard the mob shouting, 'Long live the King! Long live the Bourbons!' And we soon had proof of the fury and exasperation of a certain section of the populace which was hostile to Napoleon.

"They actually maltreated one of our superior officers who had been over-hasty in hoisting the tricolour, pursuing him all the way from the Rue Saint-Denis. We protected him from further violence, and allowed him to take refuge within the palace. We then received orders to keep the mob at bay, which redoubled its efforts to scale the railings. To do this we were forced to use our bayonets.

"We had been at the most an hour on duty at the Tuileries, when General Excelmans ordered the tricolour to be hoisted above the centre building. The re-appearance of the national colours

provoked loud enthusiasm; and for the cry of 'Long live the King!' that of 'Long live the Emperor!' was substituted. Indeed, this last drowned all others. As for ourselves, it was easy for us to put on our tricolour cockades again. Many of the men had kept their old ones, merely covering these with a bit of white calico. We stacked arms in front of the Arc de Triomphe, and everything went on as usual until six p.m. Then lamps were lighted along the route which it was supposed the Emperor would come. Several half-pay officers had assembled near the Pavillon de Flore. From one of them, M. Saunier, I heard that the Emperor was going to enter the palace on this side; so I hastened thither, and by good luck was told off for sentry duty at the very door of the Emperor's apartments.

"I had been long on the alert and almost quite alone when, at a quarter to nine, I heard a strange noise without, which told me that the Emperor was coming. A few moments later I saw him appear amid shouts of wild enthusiasm, being borne shoulder high by the officers who had accompanied him to Elba. It was in vain for His Majesty to beg them to let him walk; they carried him thus right up to the door of his apartments, where they deposited

him quite close to where I was standing. I had not seen the Emperor since the day on which he bade farewell to the National Guard in the large saloons of the palace, and in spite of my confusion and excitement I was yet able to notice that His Majesty looked much stouter.

"No sooner had the Emperor entered his apartments than I was placed on indoor duty. Marshal Bertrand, who had just succeeded General Excelmans in the command of the Tuileries, ordered me not to allow anyone to enter without first informing him or telling him the names of those who wished to see the Emperor. One of the first callers was Cambacérès, who seemed to me paler than usual.

"Soon afterwards General Bertrand's father came, and as the venerable old man was about to pay his homage to the Emperor, Napoleon said, 'No, sir; nature first!' and suiting the action to the word, he half thrust him into the arms of his son. Then came Queen Hortense, accompanied by her two children; then Count Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angély, and many others whose names I forget. I did not see callers as they came away, for they went out by another door.

"I was on duty here till eleven o'clock, when

they relieved me, and then I received an invitation to sup at a large table, on which covers were laid for at least three hundred. All those who had paid their respects to His Majesty were present. I saw the Duke of Vicenza there, and I sat opposite General Excelmans. As for the Emperor, he supped in private with Marshal Bertrand, and their fare was not half so sumptuous as ours, for it merely consisted of a roast fowl and a dish of lentils, though an officer who had been in attendance upon the Emperor ever since he left Fontainebleau, told me that His Majesty had had nothing to eat since the morning. The Emperor was extremely tired; I noticed this each time the door of his room opened and I got a glimpse of him. He was sitting opposite the fireplace, with his two feet resting on the mantelpiece.

"As we had all stopped at the Tuileries, they came to tell us at one o'clock in the morning that the Emperor had just retired, and that in case any of the soldiers accompanying him should arrive, he had given orders for them to share sentry duty with the National Guard. The poor fellows when they came were scarcely in a fit state to do this. They arrived about two o'clock in a pitiable condition, utterly fagged and footsore. All they could do was

to fling themselves down upon their knapsacks and fall fast asleep; nor did they wake even when we dressed their blistered feet as they lay prone upon the floor. Every possible care and attention was shown to them, and I always regretted not having asked the names of these two brave grenadiers, in whom we all felt deep interest.

"The Emperor went to bed at one a.m., but at five o'clock he was up again, and orders were instantly issued to all the half-pay officers to be in readiness for a review. At daybreak they were accordingly drawn up in three columns. I was just then told off to watch an officer who had aroused suspicion. He had come from Saint-Denis, and his name was M. de Saint-Chamans. After a quarter of an hour's supervision he was merely requested to withdraw. Meanwhile the Emperor had left the palace to inspect the half-pay officers, passing along their ranks, speaking to all, and shaking hands with many. 'My friends,' said he, 'I need your services; I count upon you, just as you may count upon me.'

"Magical words, these, in the mouth of Napoleon, that drew tears from the eyes of all those brave fellows whose services for the last year had been misjudged.

"Ever since morning the mob rapidly grew greater all about the approaches to the Tuileries, and crowds collected under the palace windows shouting and cheering in the hope of seeing Napoleon. Apprised of this by Marshal Bertrand, the Emperor showed himself at one of the windows, when he was greeted with all the enthusiasm that his presence always provoked. His Majesty then introduced Marshal Bertrand, placing his arm round the latter's neck and embracing him affectionately. During this affecting scene, the officers standing behind the Emperor and his friend waved the eagle-topped standards above their heads, making of the national colours a sort of canopy. At eleven o'clock the Emperor rode out to review the different regiments that kept coming in from all parts, and the heroes of the island of Elba, who had arrived at the Tuileries during the night. One never tired of contemplating these heroes, whose faces were bronzed by the Italian sun, and who had marched nearly two hundred leagues in twenty days."

Such are the interesting details given to me by a friend; and I can vouch for their accuracy as if I myself had been a witness of all that he saw during the memorable night of the 20th of March, 1815.

Continuing to live my life of seclusion during the Hundred Days, and for a long while afterwards, I can add nothing to the history of that momentous epoch. Grievous, indeed, for me was the tale of his sufferings at the time of his second abdication, and the account of the tortures inflicted upon him at Saint-Helena by that miserable Hudson-Lowe, whose infamy comes back to us across the centuries side by side with the Emperor's glory. I will merely add the following details concerning the ex-Queen of Westphalia, which I take from a document entrusted to me, and say a word in conclusion about the Cross of Honour which the Emperor presented to me.

"The Princess Catherine of Würtemberg, who, as we know, married Prince Jerome, is of great beauty, but at the same time she possesses rarer qualities, which time, instead of lessening, augments. To much natural wit she joins great mental culture, a character really worthy of the sister-in-law of an Emperor, while her love of duty is pushed to the point of fanaticism. Events have not suffered her to become a great queen, but they could not prevent her from being a most accomplished woman. Her sentiments are noble and elevated, yet she has never shown haughtiness towards anyone. Indeed,

all her associates delight to praise her domestic affability, and say that she possesses Nature's best gift, to wit, that of making everybody fond of her. Prince Jerome is not devoid of a certain grandeur of manner, and has that princely generosity which his position on the throne of Cassel taught him to exercise. As a rule, however, people find him very haughty. Catherine is specially devoted to children. She has three—two boys and a girl, all of them very good-looking. The eldest was born in August, 1814. Her daughter, the Princess Mathilde, owes her education to her mother's careful training. She is pretty, but on the whole less comely than her brothers, who all resemble their mother. Princess Catherine is very superstitious. For instance, she is horribly afraid of sitting down thirteen at table. One day at Florence at a family dinner she noticed that covers were laid for thirteen. She at once turned pale, and absolutely refused to sit down to table. Princess Eliza Bacchiocchi laughed at her sister-in-law, shrugged her shoulders, and said jestingly, 'There's nothing to be afraid of; we shall be fourteen at table, for I am pregnant.' Princess Catherine finally yielded, much to her disgust. Soon after she had to wear mourning for her unfortunate sister-in-law Princess Eliza, whose

death only deepened her superstition as to the fatal number thirteen. Let strong-minded persons boast as much as they like, yet it may be some consolation to the weak to assure them that such an event as this would not have failed to cause much vague uneasiness to the Emperor himself."

It now only remains for me to speak of the Cross of Honour bestowed upon me by my illustrious master, when he was as yet only First Consul. To allay all apprehension, let me hasten to say that I did not put it to any improper use. It now hangs on the breast of a brave veteran. In 1817 I made the acquaintance of M. Godeau, an ex-captain in the Imperial Guard. He had been dangerously wounded at Leipzig by a cannon-ball, which took off his leg. I found that he had such deep and heartfelt admiration for His Majesty that I made him a present of the cross. This cross I may call an historic relic, being the first which the Emperor himself ever wore. It is of silver, of medium size, and not surmounted by the Imperial crown. The Emperor wore it for a year; it adorned his breast for the last time at Austerlitz. Since that glorious day His Majesty used to wear an officer's gold cross, with the crown, and never again put on that of a simple private soldier.

Here, by rights, my Memoirs should end; but on looking over the first two volumes I find that I have omitted sundry anecdotes which did not occur to me at the time of writing. Impossible though I found it to set them down in their proper place, I do not wish to let the public be deprived of them; so I offer them now as an additional chapter of random stories, which I have only been careful to arrange as much as possible in the order of time.

CHAPTER XXIV

Additional Anecdotes

As I have often stated before, the Emperor's personal tastes were extremely simple, and he showed a frank dislike for the fashions of society, particularly that of late hours; of turning, so to speak, night into day. This was customary among all the most brilliant society in Paris during the Consulate and at the beginning of the Empire. Unfortunately, the Empress Josephine held very different views; she liked to sit up late, after the Emperor had gone to bed.

She was in the habit of inviting some of her Court ladies with whom she was most intimate, and other friends, to take tea with her. Gaming was wholly forbidden at these nocturnal parties, conversation being their sole charm. For the Empress such talk was a particularly amusing pastime, and this circle of choice spirits often met without the Emperor being informed of the fact. After all, such

assemblies were of the most innocent nature. However, some indiscreet official described them to the Emperor in such a way that he was little pleased to hear about them, and he expressed his displeasure to the Empress Josephine, who from that moment retired to rest at the same time as the Emperor.

Thus such tea-parties were prohibited. The members of the Empress's household received instructions never to sit up after the Emperor had gone to bed, and I recollect the precise expression used by His Majesty on this occasion: "When their masters are abed, the servants should be abed, too. And when their masters are awake, the servants ought to be up and doing."

These words produced their effect, and that same evening, as soon as the Emperor had retired, every servant in the palace went to bed, so that by half-past eleven the only people awake were the sentries.

By degrees, as always happens, such strict observance of the Emperor's orders relaxed, though the Empress never ventured to have any of her nocturnal tea-parties. His Majesty's words, however, were not forgotten, as was well shown by M. Colas, hall-porter of the Pavillon de Flore.

One morning early, about 4 a.m., M. Colas heard an unusual and perpetual sound as of someone astir overhead, so he concluded that the Emperor was up. He was right. He dressed himself as quickly as possible, and had not been at his post many minutes before the Emperor came downstairs with Marshal Duroc. Stopping for a moment, he said to M. Colas:

"Aha, Colas, up already?"

"Yes, Sire. I have not forgotten that servants ought to be up when their masters are awake."

"You've got a good memory, Colas, I am glad to say."

So far so good. The day began for Colas under favourable auspices, but evening almost served to show the reverse of the medal. That day the Emperor had been to visit the Ourck Canal works. Apparently he was much dissatisfied, for he returned to the palace in such an obviously bad humour that Colas, noticing this, let fall the remark, "He's in a jolly fine rage."

Though this was said in an undertone, the Emperor heard it, and, turning sharply round, angrily exclaimed, "Yes, sir, you're not mistaken; I *am* in a jolly fine rage!"

Then he hurried upstairs. Colas, afraid that

he had said more than he ought to have said, went to the Grand Marshal and begged him to offer his apologies to His Majesty, who, however, had no intention of punishing him for daring to make such a remark.

One of the Emperor's under-secretaries had contracted so many debts, and his creditors showed themselves so merciless that, had it not been for the following unforeseen occurrence, he must inevitably have received his dismissal.

After spending a whole night in meditating upon his position, and in trying to devise some means of getting the requisite funds to satisfy his rapacious creditors, the young spendthrift went to his office at five o'clock in the morning. Never thinking that at such an hour anyone would overhear him, to drive away dull care he began to whistle with all his might. It so happened that on that morning the Emperor had been at work for a good hour in his study, and heard the young man's solo performance. Opening the door suddenly, His Majesty said:

"Already at work, sir. Bless me! this is very good of you. Maret must be pleased with you, I should think. What is your salary?"

"Eight thousand francs a year, Sire; besides that, I have free board and lodging at headquarters."

"That is very nice. Why, you ought to be quite happy, sir!"

Seeing that His Majesty was in a good humour, the young man deemed the occasion a favourable one to get free of his embarrassments. Thus he resolved to make a clean breast of it all.

"Alas! Sire," said he, "no doubt I ought to be happy, but yet I am not."

"How's that?"

"Sire, I must make a confession to Your Majesty. I have so many 'Englishmen' worrying me! Then, there's my old father, my two sisters, and a mother to support."

"Well, you're only doing your duty. But what do you mean by 'Englishmen?' Do you have to keep any of them going?"

"No, Sire, but it is they who have ministered to my pleasures with the money they lent me. All those who have debts call their creditors 'Englishmen' nowadays."

"That will do, sir! that will do! So you have creditors, have you? Do you mean to tell me that with such a salary as yours you run into debt! Very well, sir, I won't have a man in my service

any longer who makes use of the gold of 'Englishmen,' when with what I give him he might live honourably. In an hour's time you will receive your dismissal."

The Emperor, after having expressed himself thus, took sundry papers from the writing-table, glanced severely at the young secretary, and went out, leaving him in such a state of despair that someone else came into the room just in time to prevent his attempting to commit suicide by stabbing himself with a knife. This was the aide-de-camp on duty, who brought him a letter from the Emperor, which ran as follows:

"SIR,—You deserve to be dismissed from your post, but I have thought of your family, on whose account it is I forgive you. As it is they who will suffer most for your misconduct, I send you with my pardon ten thousand francs. With this sum pay off all the 'Englishmen' who worry you, and whatever you do, don't fall into their clutches again, for in that case I should have nothing more to do with you.—NAPOLEON."

With a loud shout of "Long live the Emperor!" the young fellow rushed off at lightning speed to acquaint his family with this fresh proof of Imperial

tyranny. Nor was this all. His colleague, informed of what had happened, and being also desirous of getting some banknotes to keep his creditors quiet, redoubled his zeal and activity for work. For days together he went to the office at four o'clock in the morning, and whistled his loudest, too, for the matter of that; but it was all so much wasted energy. The Emperor never heard him.

It was at Saint-Cloud, in one of the rooms facing the orangery, that the Emperor first received Mademoiselle G. It is but stale news to say that she was the most beautiful of all the ladies to whom His Majesty paid court, and I am also inclined to believe that he considered her the most agreeable of all his acquaintances. Her conversation pleased him and made him very merry. I have often seen him in fits of laughter at some of her droll stories. It is also a fact that towards no woman was he so amiable and so gay, nor, let me add, so generous in the matter of presents. More than once I saw the beautiful actress come out of the Emperor's private apartments toying with a goodly number of pieces of paper not altogether valueless, and which she certainly did not intend to use as curl-papers. I ought to state, however,

that such magnificent generosity on the part of the Emperor was thoroughly spontaneous, for Mademoiselle G. never took advantage of his favour to ask him for anything, either for herself or her family. Never, indeed, was there intimacy more disinterested than this. The Empress Josephine also gave Mademoiselle G. presents, among others, a splendid dress to wear when she appeared as Cleopatra in *Rodogune*.

The Emperor saw Mademoiselle G. several times at the Tuileries, and then at Dresden, where he was able to judge of the progress made by her talent after her successful appearance at the Russian Court.

Saint-Cloud was also the scene of the first meeting between the Emperor and the beautiful Madame P. She was an extremely pretty and graceful woman. Towards her, too, the Emperor comported himself as a lavishly generous lover, and she could certainly flatter herself that she had made an impression upon His Majesty. Such impressions, though, were always transient ones. The lady's husband also shared Imperial favour, obtaining the post of Receiver-General. The Emperor's intimacy with Madame P. only lasted for about three or four months: first he received her at Saint-Cloud, as I have said, and then, on rare occasions, at the

Tuileries, in the small apartments. It was afterwards rumoured that the Emperor had been replaced by his brother-in-law, the King of Naples; but I cannot vouch for this.

While on this somewhat delicate subject, I may mention His Majesty's intimacy with a certain Mademoiselle G., a young and pretty Irishwoman; but, in the interests of truth, I will only allude to it in order to contradict it. The facts are as follows. The young person had been introduced to the Empress Josephine's establishment as a reader when we set out for Bayonne. She travelled with us, and the Emperor happened to notice her. But having discovered that some scheme was on foot, the Emperor gave orders for Mademoiselle to be sent back to her family, which was done forthwith. The Empress, as may well be imagined, offered no objection. This is the whole truth of this so-called amour of the Emperor.

In Paris and at Court there was much talk about the absurdities of Madame la Maréchale Lefebvre, and a goodly collection could be made of the quaint and silly remarks attributed to her. But it would need a volume equally great to register all her many kindhearted actions. The

following one seems to me to partake of both qualities, being at once touching and grotesque. Madame's coachman was seriously ill; but, for some unknown reason, would not submit to a certain refreshing operation which Harlequin is said to have preferred to bleeding. The doctors declared that this alone could save the patient. Hearing this, Madame Lefebvre went up to her coachman's room, took hold of the necessary instrument, and begged him to obey the doctor's orders. "Are you afraid of showing your ——?" she exclaimed. Still the patient offered resistance; but at last his mistress persuaded him to consent, and he received at her hands a service which few ladies of rank would have cared to render their coachman. The patient, who gave me these details, recovered, and was the father of a large family.

One day at La Malmaison, the Empress Josephine had given strict orders that no one was to be admitted. Madame Lefebvre presented herself. The footman refused her admission, and while they were thus disputing, the Empress passed from one room to the other. A mirror on the wall betrayed her presence, and there was nothing for it but to come forward and welcome her visitor.

As she entered, Madame Lefebvre turned mockingly to the footman, and said, "Ah, my lad, I've done you this time!" The poor fellow blushed to the roots of his hair, and withdrew.

Marshal Lefebvre was just as good-hearted and kindly as his wife. Of them both, indeed, it could be said that honours had not changed their character. They were for ever doing good to others, as if that were their one pleasure, their sole compensation for a grievous domestic misfortune. They had an only son, and he was certainly the greatest scamp in the whole Empire. Every day there was some complaint against him, and the Emperor frequently pardoned him because of the high esteem which he had for his worthy father. Yet all was in vain; his vicious character always reasserted itself. He was killed in some battle or other, to the intense grief of his excellent mother, to whom, however, he had more than once behaved brutally. It was usually to M. de Fontanes that she told all her sorrows, for the principal of the University, despite his finished manners and exquisite culture, was intimately connected with the Lefebvre family.

This reminds me of an anecdote which proves, far better than words may do, all the kindliness

and simplicity of the Marshal. One day he was informed that someone who would not give his name wished to speak to him. The Marshal, leaving his study, found that it was his former captain of the Guards, who occupied that post when he (the Marshal) was only a sergeant. The Marshal embraced him, offering him his services, his house, his purse; in short, treating him almost as if he were still under his orders. The ex-captain was an emigrant; he had returned, hardly knowing why. His name was promptly cancelled from the list of proscribed persons by the Marshal's influence, but he no longer wished to re-enter the service, but rather to obtain some government post. As during his stay abroad he had been in the habit of giving lessons in French and Latin, he expressed a wish to receive some university appointment.

"Very well," said the Marshal, with his German accent, "I'll take you at once to see my friend, M. de Fontanes, at the University."

Thither accordingly they both went, and the Marshal introduced his companion in the following fashion:

"My dear friend, let me present M. le Marquis de ——. He was my old captain, you know; my dear, good captain. He wants an appointment in

the University. D——n it all, he's somebody, he is—a man of the Revolution, like you and me. He's my old captain, you know, the Marquis de ——."

Then he added, "What a good, excellent fellow, too! I shall never forget how, when I called for orders, he always used to say to me, 'Lefebvre, my lad, go into the larder and refresh yourself.' Oh, he was a good, excellent captain to me!"

All the members of the Imperial family were very fond of music, especially of Italian music; but they were not musicians, and most of them sang as much out of tune as the Emperor himself. An exception, however, must be made in favour of the Princess Pauline, who really profited somewhat by Blangini's assiduous teaching, for she sang quite nicely. As regards his defective ear, Prince Eugene was worthy to be the Emperor's adopted son. Yet he was a musician, and sang with fervour, if not precisely in a way that gave pleasure to his listeners. On the other hand, Prince Eugene had a splendid voice for the parade ground, just as Count Löbau and General Dorsenne had. One of these two last-named were always chosen by His Majesty to command on grand review days.

However strict the Emperor's Court etiquette might be, there were always certain privileged persons who had the right of entering his room even when he was in bed. The number of these, however, was limited, and included M. de Talleyrand, M. de Montesquiou, M. de Rémusat, M. Maret, M. Corvisart, M. Denon, M. Murat, M. Yvan, Marshal Duroc and M. de Caulaincourt.

For a long while I used to see these persons come to the Emperor almost every morning, and their visits gave rise to the term "little levée." M. de Lavalette also came now and then, besides M. Réal, M. Fouché and M. Savary, at that time heads of the police department.

The princes of the Imperial family also enjoyed the right of coming in the morning to the Emperor's room. I often saw Madame Mère come thither. The Emperor kissed her hand very respectfully and affectionately, but I often heard him reproach her for her excessive parsimony. Madame Mère would listen, and then give reasons for not altering her mode of life; reasons which more than once exasperated His Majesty, but which, unfortunately, events have justified.

Madame Mère had once been remarkably beautiful. Indeed, she was still very handsome, particularly

when I first saw her. She was a model mother, kind to her children and ever eager to give them good advice; intervening, too, in family disputes to support those whom she considered were in the right. For a long time she took Lucien's part, and I have seen her warmly defend Jerome when Napoleon was most hostile to his young brother. All that she could be blamed for was her stinginess, which reached a positively intolerable pitch, but everybody liked her at the palace, as she was friendly and affable to all.

With regard to Madame Mère, I remember an incident which greatly amused the Empress Josephine. Madame Mère came to stay at La Malmaison for a few days. One of her ladies-in-waiting entered her bedroom, where lo! to her great amazement, she found Cardinal Fesch playing the part of waiting-maid, for he was in the act of lacing his sister's stays, who, except these and a chemise, had nothing on!

One thing about which the Emperor was very strict was the custom-house. In the matter of contraband goods he always showed inflexible severity, so much so, indeed, that one day when M. Soiris, the custom-house officer at Verceil, had seized a package containing sixty cashmere shawls sent from Constantinople to the Empress, the Em-

peror approved such seizure and the shawls were sold for the benefit of the State. His Majesty remarked at the time, "How is a sovereign to have his laws respected if he does not begin by respecting them himself?" Yet the following instance will show that he could be just.

After the peace of Tilsit, the grenadiers of the Old Guard under General Soulés returned to France. On reaching Mayence, the custom-house officials sought to perform their usual duty of visiting the baggage of the soldiers and their commander. The head of the custom-house accordingly went to inform the General that he was obliged to carry out His Majesty's most precise instructions. To this courteous information the General's answer was at once plain and forcible. Said he, "If a single custom-house officer dares to lay a finger on one of my soldiers' baggage-waggons, I'll have the whole d——d lot chucked into the Rhine!"

The director insisted, and the custom-house officials were in full force, and were about to proceed upon their visit of inspection, when General Soulés caused all the baggage-waggons to be put in the middle of the market-place, and had them guarded by a whole regiment. Thus rebuffed, the director was obliged to content himself with draw-

ing up a full report of so grave an irregularity. This was despatched to headquarters, and in due course came to the knowledge of the Emperor. Under any other circumstances, this was a most serious thing. But the Emperor had just returned to Paris, amid the wild greetings of his delighted people; peace festivals were being held; and his Old Guard was coming back covered with glory after its splendid behaviour at Eylau. All this served to hinder the Emperor from being angry; so, resolving not to punish, he preferred to treat the whole thing in a jocular way. Thus when General Soulés, of whom the Emperor was very fond, got back to Paris he called upon His Majesty and met with a cordial reception.

After talking for a time about the Old Guard, the Emperor said, "By-the-bye, Soulés, just tell me; there were fine goings on at Mayence, eh? I heard all about it; you threatened to chuck my custom-house officers into the Rhine! Would you really have done so?"

"Yes, Sire," replied the General, with his German accent, "I certainly would have done so. It was an insult to my brave grenadiers to search their baggage-waggons!"

"Come, come," replied the Emperor with much

good-humour, "I see what it is; you were doing a bit of smuggling!"

"I, Sire?"

"Yes, yes, I tell you, a bit of smuggling. You had bought some Hanover linen; you were going to make your house nice and smart because you thought I should appoint you a senator! Well, you're not wrong. Go and get measured for a senator's uniform. Only don't do this again, for another time I shall have you shot."

During our stay at Bayonne in 1808 everybody was struck by the awkwardness of the King and Queen of Spain, the bad taste shown by their dress, the disgracefully shabby state of their equipages, and the heavy constrained air of all those who formed their suite. French elegance and all our handsome Court equipages formed such a sharp contrast, that the dowdiness of the Spaniards became unspeakably absurd. The Emperor, with his exquisite tact, did not fail to notice this, but he did not like the idea of letting crowned heads be a subject for raillery.

One day when dressing he pinched my ear and said to me, "I say, you rogue, you understand all that sort of thing so well; so you might as well give

the valets of the King and Queen of Spain a hint or two; their awkwardness is positively pitiable!" I eagerly offered to carry out His Majesty's wishes, but he did not let the matter stop there, but made certain observations to the Empress about the Queen of Spain and her ladies. Josephine, the very embodiment of good taste, accordingly gave certain orders, and for two days her hairdressers and dressmakers spent their whole time in giving lessons to their Spanish colleagues in the art of tasteful and elegant dressing. This only shows that the Emperor found time for everything—time to plan a battle or teach a footman how to dress.

The Grand Marshal of the Palace, Marshal Duroc, was about the Emperor's height. His gait was awkward; he had handsome features, was very short-tempered, and swore like a trooper. But he had great administrative talent, and gave more than one proof of his gift for organisation in his wise management of the Imperial household. When the guns of the enemy robbed His Majesty of so devoted a servant and so sincere a friend, the Empress Josephine said that she only knew two men fit to replace him. These were General Drouot and M. de Flahaut. All of us hoped that one or other of

these gentlemen would be appointed; but this was not the case.

M. de Caulaincourt, Duke of Vicenza, was extremely severe, even harsh, towards servants, though he was just and loyal to a degree. His word was his bond. He was feared and yet loved. He had a piercing glance, spoke quickly and with great ease. His Majesty's fondness for him was well known, and assuredly none deserved it more than he did.

The Count de Rémusat, First Chamberlain, was of medium height, with pale, kindly features. He was obliging, amiable, and innately courteous; but he liked spending money; and as his own affairs were out of order, those of the Emperor suffered in consequence. Such lavish prodigality—a fine trait in some respects—might have suited some other monarch; but Napoleon was thrifty, and though he liked M. de Rémusat very much, he took the control of his wardrobe expenses away from him and gave it to M. de Turenne, who showed himself strictly economical; in fact, he possessed overmuch of that which was lacking to his predecessor. M. de Turenne was rather a good-looking man, a trifle too full of himself, a great talker, and an Anglomaniac, which made the Emperor dub him "My Lord Kinsester"

(*qui ne sait se taire*). But he used to tell amusing stories, and very often His Majesty made him recount all the current gossip of Paris.

When M. de Turenne replaced the Count de Rémusat as Grand Master of the Wardrobe, in order to keep within the limit of 20,000 francs (the sum allowed for the Emperor's toilette expenses) he economised in every conceivable way, and they say that he went himself to tradesmen to find out the very lowest price at which they could supply gloves, silk stockings, aloe-wood, and other things indispensable to the household servants. If this story be true, it does but reflect credit upon M. de Turenne for his probity and zeal.

I was but very slightly acquainted with Count de Ségur, Grand Master of the Ceremonies. They say he was proud and stiff in manner, though perfectly polite, and with a pretty knack of subtle repartee.

In the autumn of 1804 His Majesty frequently visited the camp at Boulogne, whence it was believed the long projected English expedition would start. While on one of his frequent rounds, the Emperor stopped at the extreme end of the left camp and spoke to one of the gunners on duty.

"What do you fellows here think of the Emperor?" he asked.

"Why, the d——d shaven-pate keeps us all on the go when he comes; whenever he's here we can't get a minute's rest. They say he's furious with those dogs of Englishmen, who always thrash us, which is not very flattering to us."

"So you are a great stickler for the honour of your regiment, eh?"

"Why, of course. Do you doubt it?"

"No, I don't; but do you care for—for money, too?"

"Now then, look here, do you want to insult me, you inquisitive fool?"

"No, no, my brave fellow, far from it; but I'll bet that you would not mind having twenty francs to drink my health with."

So saying the Emperor was about to give a napoleon to the gunner, when the latter shouted out to his comrades and sprang forward to seize His Majesty by the throat, believing he was a spy. But the Emperor suddenly flung open his grey overcoat, when the astonished soldier recognised him, and fell at his feet in utter confusion. Napoleon gave him his hand, bade him rise, and said, "Get up, my brave lad; you only did your

duty, but you must take this gold piece, and drink to the health of 'that d——d shaven-pate,' eh?" Then the Emperor walked on as if nothing had happened.

Nowadays everyone agrees that no man was ever more fitted to address soldiers than the Em peror. He himself keenly appreciated this art when he found it in others. But it was not long-winded phrases that he liked. He used to point to Vandamme's short speech to his men at Austerlitz as a masterpiece of its kind. This was as follows:

"My brave lads, there are the Russians; prime your guns; keep your powder dry; fix your bayonets; and go for them!"

I remember that the Emperor, mentioning this speech one day to Marshal Berthier, who was laughing at it, said:

"Ah, well, you may laugh, but all your lawyers in Paris could not have made a better speech. It's what a soldier can understand, and that's the way that battles are won!"

The Emperor did not like duelling. Occasionally he affected to be ignorant of such a thing, but if need be, he could exhibit the full meed of his displeasure.

Soon after the establishment of the Empire, a duel took place which caused a great scandal in Paris. The Emperor had just authorised the formation of the first foreign regiment allowed to enter the service of France; this was the Aremberg Regiment. Despite its outlandish name, most of the officers were Frenchmen. Among these were M. Charles de Sainte-Croix, of the Foreign Office, and a charming young man whom I had seen on more than one occasion at La Malmaison, M. de Mariolles, a near kinsman of the Empress Josephine. It seems that they had both been promised the same commission; and they resolved to dispute their right to it by force of arms. M. de Mariolles was killed on the spot. His death threw all the ladies at La Malmaison into a state of utter consternation. His family resolved to complain to the Emperor, who was incensed, and talked of sending M. de Sainte-Croix to prison. The latter prudently kept out of the way while the storm lasted, and the police who were set on his track had the greatest difficulty in finding him, as he was specially protected by Fouché, an intimate friend of his mother. Thus the affair blew over.

This tale about M. de Sainte-Croix reminds me

how fond the Emperor was of him. In the army his advancement was both brilliant and rapid, for, entering the service at the age of twenty-two, he was already general of division at twenty-eight, when he was killed in Spain. I often saw him at the Emperor's headquarters: a slightly-built, dapper little fellow, with a pretty, smooth face more like a girl's than that of a brave soldier, which certainly he was. His features were so delicate, his cheeks so pink, his fair hair so curly that when the Emperor was in a good humour he always called him *Miss* de Sainte-Croix!

Another case of duelling occurred at Burgos in 1808. The combatants were General Franceschi, aide-de-camp to King Joseph, and Colonel Filangieri of the Guards, both equerries to His Majesty. The cause of their quarrel was much the same as that between M. de Mariolles and M. de Sainte-Croix, for each disputed his right to be first equerry to King Joseph, both declaring that the post had been promised to them.

We had not been in Burgos Palace five minutes before the Emperor was informed of this duel, which had taken place a few hours previously within the precincts of the palace itself. The Emperor also heard that General Franceschi had been killed. He

at once sent for Colonel Filangieri, who, after a few moments, arrived. I did not see him, being in an adjoining room, but the Emperor spoke to him in such firm, incisive tones that I could hear every word he said.

"Duels, duels!" he cried, "always duels! I won't have it. I must punish such things, for I abhor them!"

"Punish me if you will, Sire, but give me a hearing."

"What have you got to say to me, you head of Vesuvius? I already forgave you that affair with Saint-Simon.[1] I shall not do so now! Besides, I cannot. Just as we have come to the country, too, and everyone ought to be good friends! What a deplorable example!"

Here the Emperor was silent for a moment, and then he continued in a somewhat milder tone:

"Yes, you've a head like Vesuvius! A pretty thing, indeed! No sooner do I arrive than there is bloodshed in my palace!"

Then, after a pause:

"See what you have done! Joseph needs good

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1 M. Filangieri had previously fought a duel in Paris with M. de Saint-Simon, the latter, as was at first supposed, being mortally wounded. After a while, however, he recovered.

officers, and now you go and rob him of two at a single blow: Franceschi, whom you have killed, and yourself, who can no longer remain in his service."

Here the Emperor paused again, and then added:

"Well, begone; go away! Consider yourself a prisoner in the fortress of Turin. There you will await my orders. Or else go to Murat; he's a touch of Vesuvius in his head, too; so he'll give you a cordial welcome. Get you gone at once!"

Colonel Filangieri did not wait to be asked, but hurried off.

I cannot say how that matter ended, but I know that it greatly troubled His Majesty, for that night as I was undressing him he kept saying, "Duels again! How shameful! Why, it's the courage of cannibals!"

If in this case the Emperor seemed inclined to relent, it was because he was much attached to young Filangieri, first for his father's sake, and also because he looked upon him as one of his adopted sons, having defrayed the cost of the young fellow's education at the French Military Academy.

I will now relate how the Emperor once played the part of peacemaker between two officers, who were both in love with the same fair lady.

The French army occupied Vienna at the time, for it was not long after the battle of Austerlitz. Two subalterns, belonging to the 46th and 50th regiments of the line, quarrelled, and resolved to settle their differences by fighting a duel. They arranged a meeting on a piece of ground some distance from Schönbrunn Palace, where the Emperor resided. The two had already drawn their swords and were hard at it, when, to their utter amazement, the Emperor with some of his staff-officers appeared upon the scene. The terrified duellists promptly dropped their weapons.

Asking the cause of the quarrel, the Emperor learnt that it was a lady who granted her favours to them both, while each desired to possess her exclusively.

The combatants, as it chanced, were recognised by one of the generals accompanying His Majesty, who thus discovered that they were two brave fellows who had distinguished themselves at Marengo and Austerlitz, and who were already marked out for promotion and the Cross. So the Emperor addressed them thus:

"My lads, woman is fickle; but so, too, is fortune; and as you have both shown your valour at Marengo and Austerlitz, further heroics are

useless. Return to your regiments, and henceforth be friends, like good soldiers."

The two officers from that moment lost all wish to renew their combat, and they soon saw that their august mediator had not forgotten them, for in a very little while they received the brevet of the Legion of Honour.

At the commencement of the Tilsit campaign, the Emperor, being at Berlin, one day fancied he would walk out to a sort of fair much frequented by our soldiers, where dancing and other amusements went on. Here he saw a quarter-master of the chasseurs walking about with a large, rotund German woman on his arm. It amused the Emperor greatly to listen to the soldier's gallant proposals.

"Let's have some fun, my ducky," said the latter; "it's the Little Corporal who pays the piper with your King's money. So come along. Forward! quick march!"

"Not so fast," said the Emperor, approaching. "No doubt soldiers ought always to go straight ahead, but just wait till I sound the charge."

The quarter-master, turning round, recognised the Emperor, and, without being the least abashed,

saluted and said, "No need for that; Your Majesty can sound the charge without a trumpet!"

This repartee made Napoleon smile, and soon afterwards it was the means of getting the soldier his epaulettes, who, but for His Majesty's whim, might have had to wait long for these. And, though such rewards in a way were due to chance, the Emperor always made sure first that they were worthily bestowed.

At Eylau there was a lack of provisions. For a week past the bread-stores were exhausted, and the poor soldiers had to get what food they could elsewhere. On the eve of the first attack, the Emperor, who wanted to see everything for himself, went his rounds from one camp to another. On reaching one bivouac where all the men were asleep, he saw some potatoes being baked in the fire, and fancied he would taste one. So, with the tip of his sword-blade he plucked it out of the glowing embers. Just then one the soldiers woke up, and cried:

"I say, you've got a fine cheek, to come and eat up our potatoes!"

"Comrade," was the reply, "I'm so dreadfully hungry that I'm sure you'll forgive me."

"Well, I don't mind your having one or two, if you really want them. But now, just clear out. Do you hear?"

Then, as the Emperor seemed in no hurry to go, the soldier loudly insisted on his departure, and they got to blows before the Emperor thought it time to let himself be recognised. Indescribable was the poor soldier's confusion. He had actually dared to strike the Emperor! Flinging himself at Napoleon's feet, he begged for mercy; and this was soon granted.

"It is I who was in the wrong," said the Emperor; "it was all my obstinacy. I am not angry with you; get up, and be quite easy both about what is past and about what is to come."

The Emperor subsequently made enquiries concerning this soldier, and found that he bore a good character and had some education. Not long afterwards he was promoted to sub-lieutenant.

The effect of such incidents as these upon the army was immense; no words can rightly describe it. All the soldiers discussed the tale; it quickened their loyalty to an amazing degree; and he occupied an honoured place in his company of whom it could be said, "The Emperor once spoke to him."

At the battle of Essling, brave General Daleim, commanding a division of the Fourth Army Corps, when the battle was at its height found himself at a point which was exposed to a merciless cannonade from the enemy's guns. The Emperor, passing close to him, remarked:

"It's pretty warm in your corner, eh?"

"Well, Sire, with your permission I'll put out the fire."

"Go ahead!"

And in a moment the redoubtable battery was captured. That evening the Emperor, perceiving General Daleim, accosted him thus:

"It seems you only had to *whistle* to it!" By this His Majesty made allusion to a trick of General Daleim, who, in fact, was always whistling.

Among the brave officers of His Majesty's staff, some, if they were not exactly cultivated, had other qualities to recommend them; nor were their talents always of a military nature. General Junot, for instance, and General Fournier were crack shots with a pistol. General Lasellette was well known for his passion for music, which reached such a pitch that he used always to travel about with a piano. This General never drank anything but

water. Herein he differed widely from his colleague, General Bisson, the most intrepid toper in the whole army. One day the Emperor, meeting him at Berlin, said, "Well, Bisson, are you still a hard drinker?"

"Pretty fair, Sire; I don't get beyond twenty-five bottles."

This was indeed a great decrease, for more than once he got to forty bottles, though he never was drunk. Nor was drinking a vice with General Bisson; it was an absolute necessity. This the Emperor knew; and, being much attached to him, he granted him a pension of twelve thousand francs from his privy purse, making him various presents of money as well.

Among the officers who were not highly educated I may mention General Gros. The way in which he obtained promotion will show this. Yet he was as brave as a lion, and a splendid specimen of manly beauty. For all that, he was unfamiliar with a pen; indeed, he could hardly write his own name. Reading, too, was not exactly his strong point. As colonel of the Guard, he was alone one day in a room in the Tuileries, waiting for the Emperor. Here he stood in front of a mirror, adjusted his cravat, pulled up his collar and admired himself generally. At last he began to talk to his